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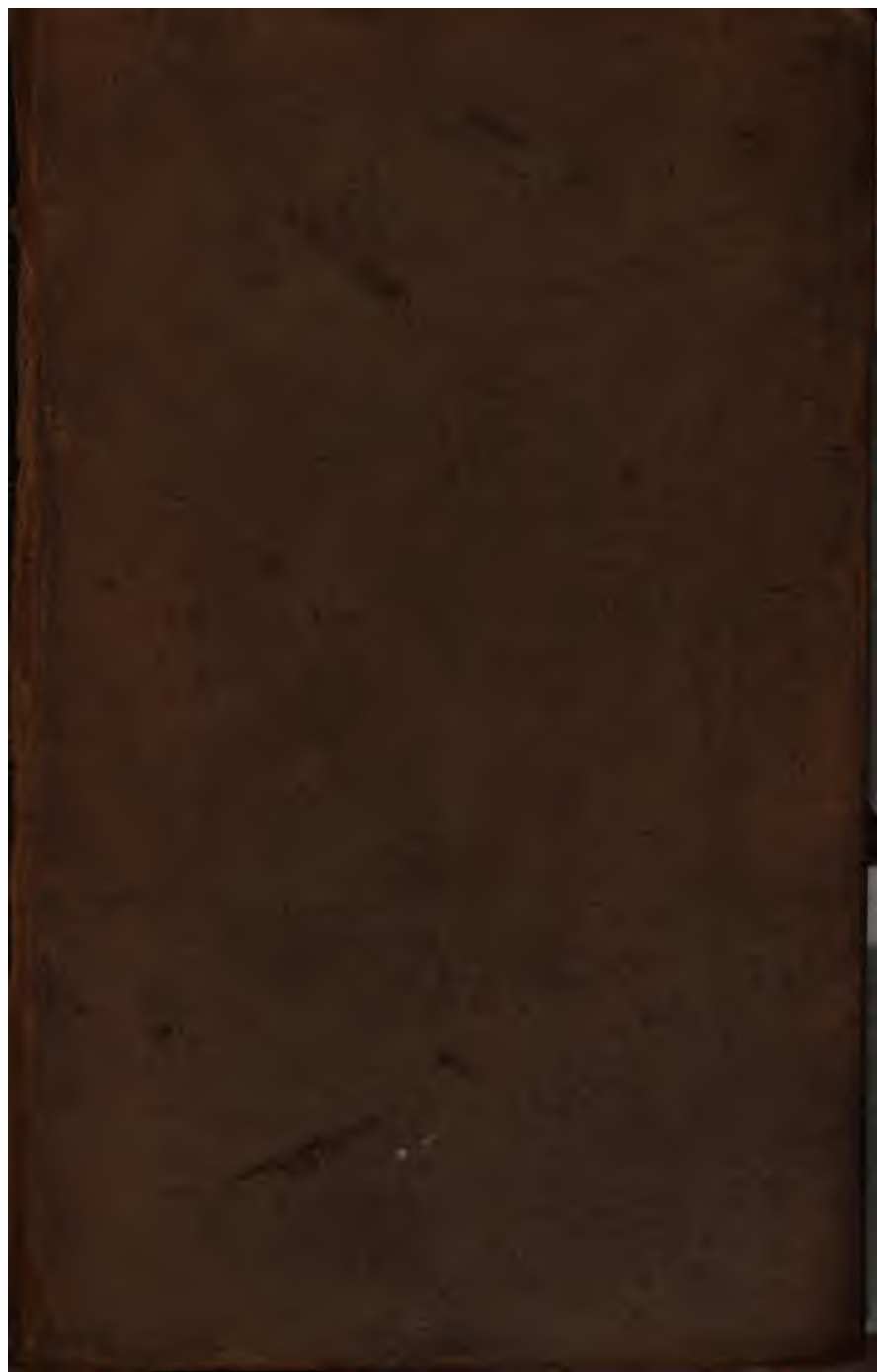
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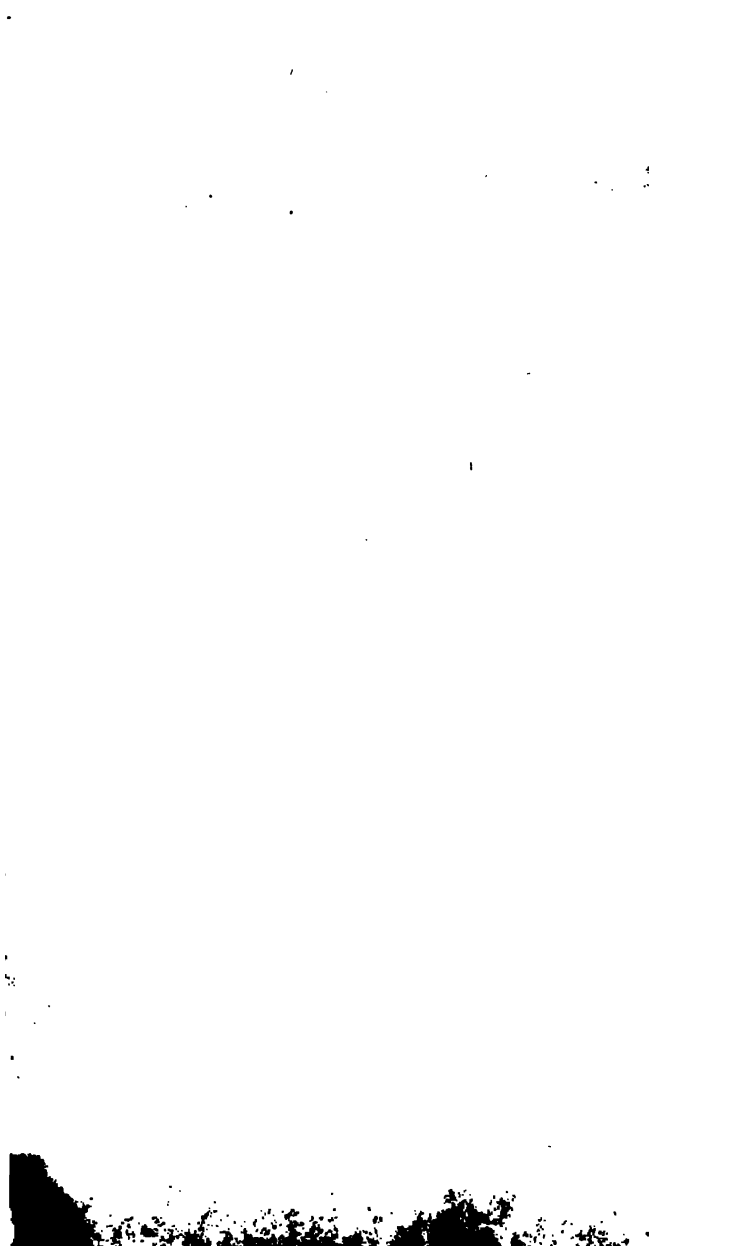


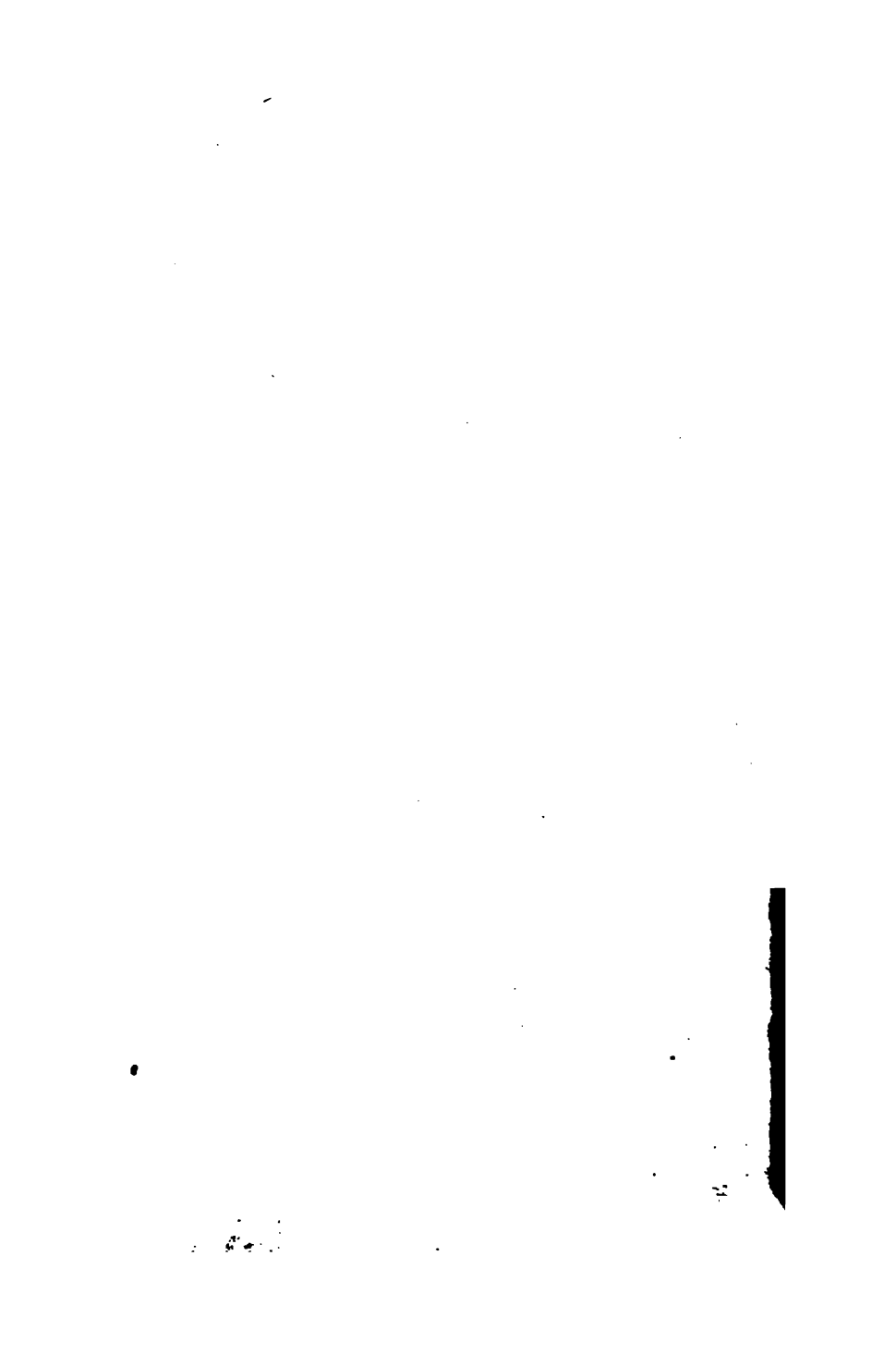
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*Memoirs of the Life*  
OF  
**David Garrick, Esq.**

INTERSPERSED WITH  
*Characters and Anecdotes*  
OF  
HIS THEATRICAL CONTEMPORARIES.

THE WHOLE  
Forming a HISTORY of the STAGE,

WHICH INCLUDES  
A PERIOD OF THIRTY-SIX YEARS.

---

BY THOMAS DAVIES.

---

————— Quem populus Romanus meliorem virum quam histrionem esse  
arbitratur, qui ita dignissimus est scena propter artificium, ut dignissimus  
sit curia propter abstinenciam. *Cicero pro Q. Roscio Comado.*

FROM THE LAST LONDON EDITION.

VOL. I.

BOSTON :  
PUBLISHED BY WELLS AND LILLY.

.....  
1818.





TO

**Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq.**

SIR,

**I**N the following sheets I have endeavoured to do justice, as far as my abilities would permit, to the memory of your predecessor in the management of the stage ; a man universally acknowledged to have been superior to all competition in his profession as an actor, and justly esteemed in his private life a shining ornament of society.

The propriety of addressing these volumes to you, will not, I believe,

be contested ; but, independent of your being the immediate successor of Mr. Garrick, and a most eminent writer in dramatick poetry, the author of the most pleasing and successful entertainment of the stage which has ever been presented ; besides too, your being endowed with many shining qualities and amiable virtues, I confess I had another motive for this dedication ; gratitude was my strongest incentive to it ; your kindness shewn to me at a time when I most stood in need of your friendship, can never be blotted from my remembrance.

This is a subject which I could with delight enlarge upon ; but I am convinced, from the constant pleasure

**you feel in conferring favours, you  
would rather do a thousand generous  
actions than be told of one.**

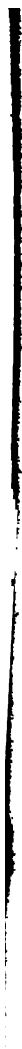
**I am, SIR,**

**Your most obedient,**

**and obliged humble servant,**

**THOMAS DAVIES.**

**Great Russell-street, Covent-Garden,  
April 22, 1780.**



## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

**I**f this little book should by good chance afford an hour's amusement to the candid reader, he will owe that pleasure to Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, who has long honoured me with his friendship and patronage. He prompted and encouraged me, justly diffident as I was of my abilities, to write *The Life of Mr. Garrick*; a work which should comprehend *A HISTORY OF THE STAGE*, during his administration of it, with characters and anecdotes of other actors his contemporaries.

To him I am indebted for the early part of Mr. Garrick's life. Dr. Johnson was familiarly acquainted with his nearest relations; and often had the pleasure, as he informs us himself in his *Life of Edmund Smith*, to meet him at the house of their common friend, Mr. Walmsley, register of Litchfield.

To the same excellent friend I am indebted for several diverting anecdotes in this narrative;

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

and I heartily wish I could boast of farther assistance from one so able to give it.

A long acquaintance with the stage, and an earnest inclination to excel in the profession of acting, to which I was for many years attached, afforded me an opportunity to know much of plays and theatrical history.

I can truly say, that I have no where willingly misrepresented either fact or character. Mistakes I may have fallen into ; but I shall not incur the charge of falsehood, for that implies an intention to deceive.

In this Third Edition, I have endeavoured to remove some mistakes and inaccuracies of the two former impressions.

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THE  
LIFE  
OF  
DAVID GARRICK, Esq.

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CHAPTER I.

Some account of Mr. Garrick's family.....His early acquaintance with Mr. Walmsley and Dr. S. Johnson.....His voyage to Lisbon .....Return to England... Becomes pupil to Dr. Johnson.....Sets out in company with him for London.

**A**LL excellence has a right to be recorded. I shall therefore think it superfluous to apologize for writing the life of a man. who, by an uncommon assemblage of private virtues, adorned the highest eminence in a publick profession.

In a narrative of Mr. Garrick's life will unavoidably be included many theatrical anecdotes, and a variety of observations upon several comedians of both sexes, who distinguished themselves by superiority in their profession. Their merits I shall endeavour to display, and their characters I intend to delineate with truth and candour.

The grandfather of Mr. Garrick was one of those unhappy French protestants, who, upon the revoca-



tion of the Edict of Nantz, sought for an asylum in England.

The father of Mr. Garrick, whose christian name was Peter, obtained a captain's commission in the army, and generally resided at Litchfield. His son David was born when he was on a recruiting party in Hereford; and baptized, as appears by the register, in the church of All Saints in that city, February the 28th, 1716. His mother's maiden name was Clough, daughter to one of the vicars in Litchfield cathedral. Captain Garrick was a man of an amiable disposition, and much respected for his affable demeanour and agreeable conversation. Mrs. Garrick, though not beautiful in her person, was very attractive in her manner; her address was polite, and her conversation sprightly and engaging: she had the peculiar happiness, wherever she went, to please and to entertain. Though restrained in their circumstances, Captain Garrick and his wife were visited by the best families in Litchfield.

Young Garrick was a most sprightly and diverting boy; he engaged the attention of every body who knew him. Mr. Walmsley, register of the Ecclesiastical Court in Litchfield, a gentleman much respected, of very considerable fortune, and a friend of Captain Garrick, took early notice of him; he would often unbend himself by listening to his odd questions, and divert himself with his smart repartees and frolicksome actions. When young Garrick was about ten years of age, he was put under the care of Mr. Hunter, master of the grammar school at Litchfield. This gentleman was an odd mixture of the

pedant and the sportsman; he was a very severe disciplinarian, and a great setter of game. Happy was the boy who could slyly inform his offended master where a covey of partridges was to be found; this notice was a certain pledge of his pardon.

David Garrick, though remarkable for not being attached to puerile diversions, which he would always abandon to give ear to some matter of entertainment and discourse, or to draw the attention of others by some lively and wild sallies of his own, did not apply himself with any assiduity to his book. He had conceived a very early passion for theatrical representation, from which nothing could turn him aside. When he was little more than ~~eleven~~ years of age, he formed the project of getting a play acted by young gentlemen and ladies. After he had made some trial of his own and his companions' abilities, and prevailed upon the parents to give their consent, he pitched upon the Recruiting Officer for the play. He assembled his little company in a large room, the destined place of representation; there we may suppose our young Bayes distributed the several characters according to the merits of the performers. He prevailed on one of his sisters to play the part of the Chambermaid; Serjeant Kite, a character of busy intrigue and bold humour, he chose for himself.

Samuel Johnson, now the first name in literature, who was then very young, but had given early proofs of uncommon genius, was applied to by the little manager for a prologue to be spoken on the occasion. With this request Mr. Johnson, we know not for

what reason, did not comply, though willing enough to oblige his young friend; and some old prologue was adapted to the peculiar circumstance of the time, and, I suppose, was spoken by Serjeant Kite.

The play was acted in a manner so far above the expectation of the audience, that it gave general satisfaction, and was much applauded. The ease, vivacity and humour of Kite is still remembered with pleasure at Litchfield.

This first stage attempt of our English Roscius was in 1727.

Not long after, he was invited to Lisbon by an uncle, who was a considerable wine merchant in that city; but his stay there was very short, for he returned to Litchfield the year following. It is imagined that the gay disposition of the young gentleman was not very suitable to the old man's temper, which was, perhaps, too grave and austere to relish the vivacities of his nephew.

However, during his short stay at Lisbon, young Garrick made himself agreeable to all who knew him, particularly to the English merchants who resided there, with whom he often dined. After dinner they usually diverted themselves by placing him upon the table, and calling upon him to repeat verses and speeches from plays, which he did with great readiness, and much to the diversion of the hearers. Some Portuguese young gentlemen of the highest rank, who were of his own age, were also much delighted with his behaviour. I have heard him say, that he had often been in company with the unfortunate duke D'Aveiro, who was put to death,

about twenty years since, for a conspiracy against the king of Portugal.

Our young traveller, on his return to England, was sent once more to Mr. Hunter's school, where, it is certain, he did not make a very considerable progress in learning; his mind was too unsettled, and his temper too volatile, to apply closely to any particular study. Several of his father's acquaintance, who knew the delight which he felt in the entertainments of the stage, often treated him with a journey to London, that he might feast his appetite at the playhouse.

Mr. Samuel Johnson, about the beginning of the year 1736, undertook the instruction of some young gentlemen of Litchfield in the belles lettres: and David Garrick, then turned of eighteen, became one of his scholars, or, to speak more properly, his friend and companion. But the master, however rich in the stores of Greece and Rome, was better disposed to teach the precepts of learning, with that exactness which is necessary to form the classical scholar, than young Garrick was willing to learn them. Dr. Johnson, in his conversation, conveys admirable lessons of instruction, and communicates knowledge with a profusion and liberality peculiar to himself; but he cannot, perhaps, easily descend to the minutiae adapted to young and uninformed minds.

Notwithstanding the brilliancy of his parts, the classical authors had as yet no charms for Mr. Garrick; his thoughts were constantly employed on the stage; for even at that time he was very busy in

composing plays. When his master expected from him some exercise or composition upon a theme, he shewed him several scenes of a new comedy, which had engrossed his time; and these, he told him, were the produce of his third attempt in dramatick poetry.

After a term of six months, Mr. Johnson grew tired of teaching the classicks to three or four scholars; and he and his pupil Garrick agreed to try their fortunes in the great metropolis.

As this is an incident in the lives of two very celebrated men, I shall endeavour to authenticate it by transcribing two letters to Mr. Colson, a celebrated mathematician at Rochester, which were published originally in the Cambridge Chronicle, and were communicated to the editors of that paper by John Newling, Esq.; who married the niece of professor Colson; both written by Mr. Walmsley, a gentleman whom I have already had occasion to mention.

TO THE REV. MR. COLSON, &c.

“ LITCHFIELD, 1737.

“ My dear old friend,

“ HAVING not been in town since the year thirty-one, you will the less wonder at seeing a letter from me; but I have the pleasure of hearing of you sometimes in the prints, and am glad to see you are daily throwing in your valuable contributions to the republick of letters.

“ But the present occasion of my writing is a favour I have to ask of you. My neighbour Capt.

Garrick, who is an honest, valuable man, has a son who is a very sensible young man, and a good scholar, and whom the Captain hopes, in some two or three years, he shall send to the Temple, and breed to the bar; but at present his pocket will not hold out for sending him to the university. I have proposed your taking him, if you like well of it, and your boarding him, and instructing him in the mathematics, philosophy, and human learning. He is now nineteen, of sober and good disposition, and is as ingenious and promising a young man as ever I knew in my life. Few instructions on your side will do; and in the intervals of study he will be an agreeable companion for you. His father will be glad to pay you whatever you shall require within his reach. I shall think myself very much obliged into the bargain.

GILB. WALMSLEY."

TO THE REV. MR. COLSON.

"LITCHFIELD, MARCH 2.

"Dear Sir,

"I had the favour of your's, and am extremely obliged to you; but cannot say I had a greater affection for you upon it than I had before, being long since so much endeared to you, as well by an early friendship, as by your many excellent and valuable qualifications. And had I a son of my own, it would be my ambition, instead of sending him to the university, to dispose of him as this young gentleman is.

" He and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. S. Johnson, set out this morning for London together. Davy Garrick is to be with you early the next week, and Mr. Johnson, to try his fate with a tragedy, and to see to get himself employed in some translation, either from the Latin or the French. Johnson is a very good scholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy writer. If it should any ways lay in your way, I doubt not but you would be ready to recommend and assist your countryman.

G. WALMSLEY."

It appears by these letters, that Mr. Walmsley had a very particular regard for Mr. Johnson and David Garrick. The friends of the latter indeed entertained some hopes, that if Mr. Walmsley had continued a single man, young Garrick would have gained, by his means, a settlement for life; but his marrying in an advanced age put an end to these expectations.

Dr. Johnson, in his Biographical and Critical Prefaces, a work which can never be too much read and admired, has, in the life of Edmund Smith, embraced an opportunity to shew his gratitude to the memory of Mr. Walmsley.

The tragedy, mentioned in Mr. Walmsley's letter, was Irene, which was afterwards acted with applause, though not with success adequate to its merit.

## CHAPTER II.

Mr. Garrick's arrival in London.....Death of his uncle.....He boards with Mr. Colson.....Death of his father and mother.....Seriously resolved to commence actor.....Introduced to the playhouse managers.....Sets out with the comedians for Ipswich.....His success there.

ALMOST as soon as Mr. Garrick arrived in London, he was entered of Lincoln's-Inn, March 9, 1736 ; but his finances would not enable him to put himself under the care of Mr. Colson till the death of his uncle, who, about the year 1737, left Portugal, with an intention to settle in London, in which place he soon after fell sick and died. Some time before his death, his nephew David insinuated to him, that he ought to make him some compensation in his will for the disappointment which he had obliged him to incur by a fruitless voyage to Lisbon. The old gentleman was convinced that the remonstrance was just, and bequeathed to David a larger portion of his effects than to any of his brother's children ; for to him he left one thousand pounds, and to the others five hundred pounds each.

With the interest of the one thousand pounds Mr. Garrick prudently embraced the means of acquiring useful knowledge, by the instruction of Mr. Colson. His proficiency, however, in mathematicks and philosophy, was not extensive ; his mind was theatrically led, and nothing could divert his thoughts from the study of that to which his genius so powerfully



prompted him. However, in the company of so rational a philosopher as Mr. Colson, he was imperceptibly and gradually improved in the talent of thinking and reasoning ; and the example and precepts of so wise a man were not vainly bestowed on a mind so acute and rational as that of the young boarder.

His father, Capt. Garrick, had been many years upon half pay ; but, with a view to the better support of his family, he had embraced an offer to receive the whole emoluments of his post from a brother officer, on condition that he should reside at Gibraltar in his stead. Much about the time when his son David lived with Mr. Colson, the Captain returned to England from that fortress, where he had lived several years. He purposed to sell his commission, from an affectionate and tender motive to procure some permanent subsistence for a wife and seven children ; but his health was so shattered, and his constitution so entirely broken, that he was not permitted to accomplish his purpose ; and he died very soon after.

There was not much more than the intervention of a year between the death of Mr. Garrick's father and his mother.

Mr. Garrick now found himself free from all restraint, and in a situation to indulge himself in his darling passion for acting, from which nothing but his tenderness for so dear a relation as a mother had hitherto restrained him.

However, during the short interval between his mother's death and his commencing comedian, he

engaged for some time in the wine trade, and was in partnership with his brother, Mr. Peter Garrick ; they hired vaults in Durham Yard, for the purpose of carrying on the business. The union between the brothers was of no long date ; Peter was calm, sedate, and methodical ; David was gay, volatile, impetuous ; and, perhaps, not so confined to regularity as his partner could have wished. To prevent the continuance of fruitless and daily altercation, by the interposition of friends, the partnership was dissolved amicably.

And now Mr. Garrick prepared himself in earnest for that employment which he so ardently loved, and in which Nature designed he should so eminently excel.

He was frequently in the company of the most celebrated actors ; he got himself introduced to the managers of the theatres, and more particularly to Mr. Fleetwood, by the means of *Hazard* and Woodward. He tried his talent in the recitation of some particular and favourite portions of plays. Now and then he indulged himself in the practice of mimicry, a talent which, however inferiour, is never willingly resigned by him who excels in it. Sometimes he wrote criticisms upon the action and elocution of the players, and published them in the prints. These sudden effusions of his mind generally comprehended judicious observations and shrewd remarks, unmixed with that gross illiberality which often disgraces the instructions of modern stage criticks.

Mr. Garrick's diffidence withheld him from trying his strength at first upon a London theatre ; he

thought the hazard was too great, and embraced the advantage of commencing his noviciate in acting with a company of players, then ready to set out for Ipswich, under the direction of Mr. William Giffard and Mr. John Dunstall, in the summer of 1741.

The first effort of his theatrical talents was exerted in Aboan, in the play of Oroonoko, a part in which his features could not easily be discerned; under the disguise of a black countenance, he hoped to escape being known, should it be his misfortune not to please. Though Aboan is not a first rate character, yet the scenes of pathetick persuasion and affecting distress, in which that character is involved, will always command the attention of the audience, when represented by a judicious actor. Our young player's applause was equal to his most sanguine desires. Under the assumed name of Lyddal, he not only acted a variety of characters in plays, particularly Chamont in the Orphan, Captain Brazen in the Recruiting Officer, and Sir Harry Wildair; but he likewise attempted the active seats of the Harlequin. In every essay he gave such delight to the audience, that they gratified him with constant and loud proofs of their approbation. The town of Ipswich will long boast of having first seen and encouraged so great a genius as Mr. Garrick.

## CHAPTER III.

Characters of the actors when Mr. Garrick commenced player.

**B**EFORE I introduce our young adventurer upon a London stage, it may not be improper to review the state of our playhouses at that period, and to give a succinct relation of the several actors and their merits, who were in possession of the principal characters when he stood forth a candidate for the Buskin and the Sock.

The immediate successors of the acknowledged great masters in the profession of acting, Booth, Wilkes, and Cibber, were much inferiour to their predecessors. The actors in tragedy fell infinitely short of the noble warmth, masterly elocution, and graceful action of Booth; nor could they assume the animated spirit, elegant address, and fine feelings of Wilkes. Cibber, in the various extent of his comick exhibitions, held no equal; besides, he was much celebrated for some parts in tragedy; for Richard the Third, Iago, and Cardinal Wolsey. A taste for Shakspeare had, indeed, been lately revived, by the encouragement of the most distinguished persons of both sexes; but more especially by the ladies, who formed themselves into a society under the title of The Shakspeare Club. They bespoke, every week, some favourite play of this great writer; but the unequal skill of the performers could not support the good taste and judgment of the publick.

Mr. Ryan had enjoyed a kind of prescriptive claim to all the lovers in tragedy, and fine gentlemen in comedy, at the theatres in Lincoln's-inn-fields and Covent-garden, for near thirty years.

In a conversation which I had with him some years before his death, he told me that he began the trade of acting when he was a boy of about sixteen or seventeen years of age ; and that one of his first parts, which was suddenly put into his hands in the absence of a more experienced player, was Seyton, an old officer in the tragedy of Macbeth, when Betterton acted the principal character. As Betterton had not seen Ryan before he came on the stage, he was surprised at the sight of a boy in a large full bottom wig, such as our judges now wear on the bench. However, by his looks he encouraged him to go on with what he had to say ; and when the scene was over, he commended the young actor, but reproved old Downs, the prompter, for sending a child to him instead of a man advanced in years. The first dawn of his good fortune was the distinction paid him by Mr. Addison, who selected him from the tribe of young actors, to play the part of Marcus in Cato. The author and his friend Steel invited him to a tavern some time before the play was acted, and instructed him in his part. The old gentleman felt an honest pleasure in recollecting that early mark of favour bestowed on him by men of such eminence. To speak of him with candour as an actor, he certainly rendered himself very useful, by playing a great variety of characters in tragedy and comedy ; if we should not rank him amongst first performers, yet

was his merit not of the inferiour class. He is said to have copied Powell and Wilkes in his manner of acting. His Sir Harry Wildair, which he played often during the life of Wilkes, fell far short of that ease, elegance, gayety and spirit, which the original actor displayed to great perfection. But his Orestes, which I was well assured he copied from Powell, was spirited and impassioned throughout ; the mad scene in the last act was extremely affecting, and approached to the masterly style. He was much celebrated for Iago and Edgar. His most perfect characters in comedy were, Ford in the Merry Wives of Windsor, and Mosca in Ben Jonson's Fox. In his person, Ryan was something above the middle size ; in his action and deportment, rather easy than graceful ; he was often awkward in the management of his head, by raising his chin, and stretching out his neck ; his voice was very strong, but harsh and dissonant. It has been said, that the wound he received in the mouth by a street robber had occasioned an alteration in the tone of his voice ; but this is a mere fable ; he gained indeed, by that accident, a scar which accompanied him to the grave. He took great delight in walking, and by persevering in that exercise, preserved his health to a good old age.

Ryan was a man whose temper was remarkably mild and inoffensive, but, at the same time, he was brave and intrepid. He once unhappily was obliged to give a proof of his courage, which ended fatally. In the juvenile part of his life, he happened to be at a house of entertainment ; and as he was just sitting down to supper, he was rudely and unprovokedly at-

tacked by a boisterous man, who drew his sword upon him. Ryan was then unarmed, but he parried the thrust with a plate till he could get to his sword, which was then hanging up; as soon as he reached it, with the first lunge he killed his adversary. He was tried for the fact, and honourably acquitted.

Walker, the original Macheath, was at this time, by his irregular manner of living, reduced to a state of distress and poverty, and obliged to shift from one playhouse to another. However, the very dregs of his acting were respectable.

In the early part of his life, when he first appeared at Drury-lane, he was taken notice of by Booth, who thought him worthy of his countenance and instruction. He had from nature great advantages of person and voice. His countenance was manly and expressive, which may be seen in a mezzotinto of him in the part of Macheath, and is very like him. The humour, ease, and gayety, he assumed in this character, established his own reputation, and was one great support of the Beggar's Opera. He knew no more of musick than barely singing in tune; but his singing was supported by his inimitable action, by his speaking to the eye, not charming the ear. In several parts of tragedy, Walker's look, deportment and action, gave a distinguished glare to tyrannick rage, and uncommon force to the vehemence of anger. His *Bajazet* and *Hotspur* have scarce been rivalled. In the gay libertine, either in comedy or tragedy, he was a pleasing actor; and of *Polydore* in the *Orphan*, and *Belmour* in the *Old Bachelor*, it was doubtful to say in which he excel-

led most. He was the only actor that I remember who could give consequence to such under parts as Worthy in the Recruiting Officer, and Harcourt in the Country Wife. His voice was very strong and pleasing, till he spoiled it by intemperance, and the abominable practice of drinking between the acts of a play. This unhappy man died in great poverty, in Ireland, about the year 1744.

Bridgewater was esteemed a general player; and it was with some a doubt whether he acted the best or worst in tragedy or comedy; and, though it may seem paradoxical, yet he certainly was equally well and ill in both. For example, in the *Ventidius* of Dryden, in his *All for Love*, he was a true portrait of the rough, brave, old soldier; in *Tamerlane* he was solemnly drowsy in speaking, and struttingly insignificant in action. He was a very judicious player in the character of the *Suspicious Husband*, and very disagreeable in the *Lover* or the *Miser*. His *Hubert* in *King John* was as characteristically just, as his *King Henry* in *Richard the Third* was truly offensive. In short, Bridgewater made it doubtful, whether he pleased or displeased most. Towards the latter part of his life, he was a dealer in coals, and became indolent in his business of the stage. He died August 20, 1754.

Milward and Delane were then in the zenith of their reputation; they acted heroes and lovers with a considerable share of applause at Drury-lane theatre. Milward's person had the advantage of proper height, nor was he ungraceful in his deportment. His countenance was pleasing and expressive, his



voice strong and harmonious: but he was frequently misled by his ear, which could not often distinguish noise from passion, and ranting from sensibility. Not but that Milward sometimes gave rational pleasure to the best judges, by the just modulation of his tones, and natural expression of the passions. He was celebrated for the parts of Hamlet, Castalio, Jaffier, and Oroonoko; but I think he excelled most in characters where distress is dignified by superiority of rank, is rendered venerable by age, and where a parent's anguish sheds the tear of domestick wo.

Delane's person and voice were well adapted to the parts he generally acted: Alexander the Great was his most admired and followed part, and his success in that character brought him from Goodman's-fields to the more critical audience of Covent-garden. He had natural requisites, which, with judgment and assiduity, would have rendered him a favourite actor; but his attachment to the bottle prevented his rising to any degree of excellence. I think his chief merit was not generally understood. His address and manner were easy and polite; and he excelled more in the well-bred man, in a Bevil in the *Conscious Lovers*, and a Manly in the *Provoked Husband*, than in those parts which pushed him into notice.

He who understood propriety in speaking better than any other actor of the time, was Quin. But though this comedian was a very natural reciter of plain and familiar dialogue, he was utterly unqualified for the striking and vigorous characters of tragedy; he could neither express the tender nor violent

emotions of the heart; his action was generally forced or languid, and his movement ponderous and sluggish. But it must be confessed that he often gave true weight and dignity to sentiment, by a well regulated tone of voice, judicious elocution, and easy deportment. His Brutus and Cato will be remembered with pleasure by the surviving spectators of them, when their candour would wish to forget his Lear and Richard.

That admirably pathetick actress, Mrs. Cibber, was then in her progress to that great reputation, which she so justly merited, and afterwards so happily enjoyed.

## CHAPTER IV.

Account of the old actors continued.

**B**UT however difficult it may be to assume the noble, the graceful, and the sublime, in acting; to represent the lover, the hero, and the monarch; the follies and absurdities of life, with all the various colours of humour and affectation, arising from characteristic discrimination, are more easily imitated, and more happily attained. The reason, I presume, is obvious; we never saw an Alexander or an Anthony, a Tamerlane or a Cæsar; but a Wronghead, a Gripe, a Marplot, and a Sterling, we converse with every day.

Amidst the scantiness of good tragick actors, we had many who excelled in the comic vein. Quin, Johnson, Chapman, Macklin, Hippisley, Woodward, Ciber, Neale, Berry, Yates, Taswell, Harper, Arthur; Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Woffington and Mrs. Macklin; most of them original in their proper walk; all these supported the comick muse with great ability.

Quin, in characters of singular humour and dignified folly, of blunt and boisterous demeanor, of treacherous art, contemptuous spleen, and even of pleasing gravity, had no equal. In Falstaff, Henry the Eighth, Jaques, in *As You Like It*, the Plain Dealer, the Double Dealer, the Old Batchelor, Apemantus in *Timon*, Justice Balance in the Recruiting Officer; in all these, and many other parts, he was a most judicious and pleasing actor.

Mr. William Mills, the son of Mr. John Mills, who in private life was an ornament to society, and in his professional character very respectable, and who died in 1736, was an actor as frequently seen, though not so much admired, as any of his most celebrated contemporaries. In person he was tall, large, and awkwardly made, and neither in address or manner equal to those principal parts in comedy which he frequently acted. However, by a careful assiduity, he rendered his services useful to the managers, and not disagreeable to the publick. By constantly observing the excellencies of Wilkes, he caught something of his manner; but the ease and grace of his exemplar he could not possibly adopt. However, by being often seen he was not disliked. His great industry and application, together with his inoffensive character, which is not unhappily hit off by the name of Sir Friendly Huff, which I think Paul Whitehead bestowed on him, gained him many friends and no enemies.

Harry Fielding has with great humour as well as pleasantry, given a lively picture of this actor in a recommendation of him to the town for a benefit. This part of Fielding's writings is not, I believe, amongst the published works of that author, and it will give the reader so much pleasure, that I shall not deprive him of it.

"Mr. Mills, who from his peculiar facetious and good humoured disposition, retains still the name of Billy Mills amongst his familiars, is a strong example of the fickleness and inconstancy of fortune. He hath by slow degrees risen to the top of theatrical greatness, and by as slow degrees tumbled down

again. He succeeded to the graver parts in comedy of Booth, and to the gayer characters in which Wilkes had shined ; and maintained both with equal ability.

“ In tragedy he hath likewise been very considerable, where, not to dwell on every particular excellence, he is thought of all others to have made the best appearance through a trap-door. For this reason, those characters, which are in some part of the play to enter upon the stage head-foremost, generally fell to his lot.

“ He was at all times a very safe actor ; and as he never shocked you with any absurdity, so he never raised horror, terour, admiration, or any of those turbulent sensations, to that dangerous height, to which Mr. Garrick (however good a man he may otherwise be) hath been guilty of carrying them. From the pinnacle of theatrical greatness, where he was once seated, he hath by degrees fallen : not through his own demerit, for he is now as good as ever he was, but the greatest misfortune in the world, namely, successful rivals. This reverse of fortune he hath borne with heroick constancy and christian resignation ; he hath indeed continued honest Billy Mills ; nor have envy, malice, or any other species of malignity, been able to hurt his natural good disposition.

“ Indeed his character in private life is so amiable, that if the ladies will patronise one of the best and kindest husbands ; and the world in general will encourage an honest, good-natured and inoffensive man, he and his little family will owe many a future happy hour to the publick on Monday next ; and his be-

nefit, though one of the last, will not be one of the least."

Ben Johnson excelled greatly in all his namesake's comedies, then frequently acted. He was, of all comedians, the chastest, and the closest observer of nature. Johnson never seemed to know that he was before an audience; he drew his character as the poet designed it. To form some idea of Johnson, the reader must call to mind the simplicity of Weston. However, Johnson was admired in some tragical parts; the petulant, intolerant, cruel, yet fawning, character of Bishop Gardiner in *Henry the Eighth*, Johnson represented with critical exactness, unmixed with that buffoonery which has since been adopted by the actors of Gardiner.

Chapman was much and justly admired in parts of absurd impudence, of bold impertinence and pert foppery. He was celebrated for Brass in the *Confederacy*, Marplot, and Lucio in *Measure for Measure*; his dry and voluble expression of Touchstone's sarcastick humour has been equalled by nobody but Mr. King. Though Theophilus Cibber had some degree of merit in a variety of characters, and especially in brisk coxcombs; and more particularly in parts of extravagant humour, such as Pistol in Shakspeare's *Henry the Fourth*; yet he generally mixed so much of false spirit and grimace in his acting, that, though he pleased the many, he often disgusted the judicious spectator.

Neale was a sort of grotesque actor, whose particular talent was suited only to some very peculiar characters, in which he was sure to excel every

body else. Mr. Garrick, when he was under some difficulty how to distribute a part, used to say, "Come, I will give it to Neale; for, I am sure, he will make more of it than any body can." He excelled in Shakspeare's Lancelot in the Merchant of Venice, Slender in the Merry Wives of Windsor, and Sir Joseph Wittol in the Old Batchelor.

Hippisley was a comedian of lively humour and droll pleasantry, which he often pushed to their full extent; but he would generally stop short when on the brink of excess or offence. He may be rightly termed a sober Shuter, a late actor of great merit, whose overflow of comick vivacity often degenerated into buffoonery. Hippisley had as powerful an influence over the audience as Ned Shuter of merry memory, but never made such a wanton use of it. At his first appearance he was always received with a loud laugh and a burst of applause. Hippisley pleased every body but the actors of his time, who, with an envious malignity, would often compare the weakest of his performances to the best of Colley Cibber and Ben Johnson; men, who, in some parts, were indisputably his superiours. But no comedian ever excelled him in describing the excesses of avarice and amorous dotage. He kept alive an indifferent comedy of Durfey, now absolutely forgotten, called The Plotting Sisters, by his incomparable representation of Fumble, a ridiculous old dotard. Corbaccio, in Jonson's Volpone, is a strong portrait of covetousness, a vice which predominates in the man, when almost all his faculties of body and mind are extin-

guished. Corbaccio can neither see, nor hear perfectly. Hippiusley's look told the audience that he was a deaf man. for his dim eyes seemed to inquire out the words which were spoken to him. In this character it was acknowledged that he excelled his great competitor Johnson. Though he was an actor that generally indulged to the full his power of exciting laughter. yet he could, at times, be as chaste in his colouring as a critical audience could wish. In Fluellen, the Welch Captain in Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth, he represented the choleric spirit and minute oddities of the honest ancient Briton, without the least mixture of trick or buffoonery. Hippiusley's Fluellen was the brave officer and gallant soldier, marked with harmless peculiarities.

Taswell was a man of humour and a scholar, as original in his acting as in his private conversation, which was generally seasoned with splenetick remarks, and acute observations upon men and things. He was bred at Cambridge. He wrote a poem called the Deviliad,\* which was deficient neither in fancy nor humour. He was a confined actor; but what he did was generally distinguished with marks of genius. His Polonius was such as Shakespeare drew him, a prating, pedantick, busy, obsequious statesman; a fool with a dash of the knave; for the man who is too ready to comply with the will of others, cannot be honest. In Justice Cle-

\* So called from De Veil, a justice of peace, employed by Fleetwood to check the insolence of the footmen, who claimed a gallery at the playhouse for their own use.



ment, a part in the *Every Man in his Humour* of Ben Jonson, he gave the picture of a city magistrate in the days of queen Elizabeth: at that time property, humour, pleasantry, hospitality, and a knowledge of the law, seemed to be the necessary ingredients to form a justice of peace. His *Dogberry* was a good picture of ignorant archness and laughable impertinence. Taswell's talents would have been lost to the stage, if they had not been brought forward by Charles Macklin.

Harper was a lusty fat man, with a countenance expressive of much mirth and jollity; his voice was strong and musical, well adapted to many parts in ballad operas, and farces. This actor had the honour to be a competitor with Quin in *Falstaff*; and the criticks agreed, that though the latter was more judicious, Harper excited more laughter. He was a just representative of our country gentlemen, of booby 'squires, and fox-hunters. The brutal and jolly ignorance of his *Sir Harry Gubbins* in the *Tender Husband*, afforded much sport; and the absurd humour, awkward bashfulness, and good natured obstinacy, of *Sir Wilful Witwoud* in the *Way of the World*, were, in Harper, as diverting as a merry group of spectators could wish. In the *Wives Metamorphosed*, his *Jobson the Cobbler* was an admirable second to Mrs. Clive's inimitable *Nell*. I must not forget to relate, that Harper, who was a housekeeper, and a man of very fair character, was taken up by a warrant from a justice of peace, at the instance of J. Highmore, Esq.; patentee of Drury-lane, and sent to Bridewell, from whence

he was soon after triumphantly delivered by the Court of King's Bench. His crime was joining the revoltors at the Hay-market. The reason of fixing on Harper was in consequence of his natural timidity. He died in 1742 of a fever on his spirits.

Mr. John Arthur was a very good copier of nature in some peculiarities of humour. His *Periwinkle*, in the *Bold Stroke for a Wife*, was diverting; and his *Don Manuel*, in *She Wou'd and She Wou'd not*, critically just. He was a most diverting clown in all the pantomimes of Mr. Rich. This actor had a head turned to mechanicks; and when Paul Whitehead, and Carey the surgeon, from some ridiculous pique, were determined to affront the Free Masons, by a mock procession of strange figures in a dung-cart, they applied to Arthur to furnish them with an ass's head, which he executed to their satisfaction. Arthur was a man of understanding and good observation, but the particularity of his humour often led him into whimsical distresses.

Mrs. Macklin was a very natural and close presenter of such old women as were generally distinguished by humour, petulance, avarice, or folly. She excelled particularly in two plays of Beaumont and Fletcher; *Abigail* in the *Scornful Lady*, and the *Landlady* in the *Chances*. She formed herself upon the model of that most admirable comick actress Mrs. Willis. She was so near her in her playing Mrs. Amlet in the *Confederacy*, in giving the true colourings to avarice, impertinence and dotage, that

which of them excelled most was a matter of some doubt to the best criticks. Mrs. Macklin sometimes attempted parts in high life, and in tragedy, such as Lady Townly and Lady Macbeth; but neither her voice, figure, nor manner, were adapted to characters of that class.

The rest of the comick actors, male and female, I shall have occasion to speak of more at large in the progress of this narrative.

## CHAPTER V.

Mr. Garrick's first appearance on a London stage.....His success....

Mr. Pope's opinion of him.....Acts a variety of characters.....

Envied by Quin.....Spoken slightly of by Colley Cibber.....Shares the profits of Goodman's-fields theatre with the manager.

THE reader has seen that Mr. Garrick took all the necessary steps and precautions, previous to his appearance on a London stage, to ensure his success when he should come forth a candidate for fame. He had performed a noviciate at Ipswich ; and even before his going to that place, he had studied, with great assiduity, a variety of parts in the different walks of acting. The Clown, the Fop, the Fine Gentleman, the Man of Humour, the Sot, the Valet, the Lover, the Hero, nay, the Harlequin, had all been critically examined, and often rehearsed and practised by him in private. After long reflection and much serious weighing of consequences, he fixed upon Richard the Third for his first part in London. He had often declared he would never choose a character which was not suitable to his person ; for, said he, if I should come forth in a hero, or any part which is generally acted by a tall fellow, I shall not be offered a larger salary than forty shillings per week. In this he glanced at the folly of those managers who used to measure an actor's merit by his size.

He could not possibly give a stronger proof of sound judgment, than in fixing his choice on Richard. The

play has always been popular, on account of its comprehending such variety of historical and domestic facts, with such affecting scenes of exalted misery and royal distress. Richard was well adapted to his figure; the situations in which he is placed are diversified by a succession of passion, and dignified by variety and splendour of action. A skilful actor cannot wish for a fairer field on which to display his abilities.

On the 19th of October, 1741, David Garrick acted Richard the Third, for the first time, at the playhouse in Goodman's fields. So many idle persons, under the title of gentlemen acting for their diversion, had exposed their incapacity at that theatre, and had so often disappointed the audiences, that no very large company was brought together to see the new performer. However, several of his own acquaintance, many of them persons of good judgment, were assembled at the usual hour; though we may well believe, that the greatest part of the audience was stimulated rather by curiosity to see the event, than invited by any hopes of rational entertainment.

An actor, who, in the first display of his talents, undertakes a principal character, has generally, amongst other difficulties, the prejudices of the audience to struggle with, in favour of an established performer. Here, indeed, they were not insurmountable. Cibber, who had been much admired in Richard, had left the stage. Quin was the popular player; but his manner of heaving up his words, and

his laboured action, prevented his being a favourite Richard.

Mr. Garrick's easy and familiar, yet forcible style in speaking and acting, at first threw the criticks into some hesitation concerning the novelty as well as propriety of his manner. They had been long accustomed to an elevation of the voice, with a sudden mechanical depression of its tones, calculated to excite admiration, and to entrap applause. To the just modulation of the words, and concurring expression of the features from the genuine workings of nature, they had been strangers, at least for some time. But after he had gone through a variety of scenes, in which he gave evident proofs of consummate art, and perfect knowledge of character, their doubts were turned into surprise and astonishment, from which they relieved themselves by loud and reiterated applause. They were more especially charmed, when the actor, after having thrown aside the hypocrite and politician, assumed the warrior and the hero. When information was brought to Richard, that the duke of Buckingham was taken, Garrick's look and action, when he pronounced the words,

——— Off with his head !

So much for Buckingham !

were so significant and important, from his visible enjoyment of the incident, that several loud shouts of approbation proclaimed the triumph of the actor and satisfaction of the audience. The death of Richard was accompanied with the loudest gratulations of applause.

The same play was acted six or seven times successively. The receipts of the treasury, which I have before me, amounted, in seven nights, to no more than 216*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*; and this conveys a certain evidence, of what use the kindness, as well as judgment, of the manager is to the growing fame of an actor. Giffard, to a good understanding, joined a sense of honour, with great humanity. He saw Garrick's merit, and did all in his power to support it. Several other parts, among which were Aboan in *Oroonoko*, Chamont in the *Orphan*, Clodio in the *Fop's Fortune*, Bayes in the *Rehearsal*, succeeded Richard; which favourite character was repeatedly called for, and acted often to crowded audiences.

In Bayes he introduced an imitation of several celebrated actors, particularly Delane, Bridgewater, Mills, Hale, and Giffard. He represented their voice and manner so perfectly, that the theatre echoed with repeated shouts of applause. It was observed that several of the players enjoyed the jest very highly till it became their own case; they then gave as evident signs of uneasiness and disgust, as they had before of pleasure and satisfaction. This unjustifiable method of depreciating the abilities of his fellow comedians, by pointing out their peculiarities, he continued two or three years, and then dropped it as an unfair and cruel practice. It has been since resumed by some actors of great and general merit, and by others who have nothing else to recommend them to publick notice.

Such was the universal approbation which followed our young actor, that the more established theatres

of Drury-lane and Covent-garden were deserted : Mr. Garrick drew after him the inhabitants of the most polite parts of the town : Goodman's-fields was full of the splendour of St. James's and Grosvenor-square ; the coaches of the nobility filled up the space from Temple-bar to Whitechapel. He had so perfectly convinced the publick of his superiour accomplishments in acting, that not to admire him would not only have argued an absence of taste, but the grossest stupidity ; those who had seen and been delighted with the most admired of the old actors, confessed that he had excelled the ablest of them in the variety of his exhibitions, and equalled them all in their most applauded characters.

Mr. Pope was persuaded by Lord Orrery to see him in the first dawn of his fame : that great man, who had often seen and admired Betterton, whose picture he had painted, and which is now in the possession of Lord Mansfield,\* was struck with the propriety and beauty of Mr. Garrick's action ; and, as a convincing proof that he had a good opinion of his merit, he told Lord Orrery, that he was afraid the young man would be spoiled, for he would have no competitor.

Mr. Garrick shone forth like a theatrical Newton ; he threw new light on elocution and action ; he banished ranting, bombast, and grimace ; and restored nature, ease, simplicity, and genuine humour.

We must not wonder that the comedians were the last who became proselytes to the new philosophy of the theatre : the players, from their limited station,

\* Mr. Pope's father designed to have bred his son a Painter.



and not from malignity of temper, are more liable to envy and jealousy than persons of most other professions. Encroachments and altercations, in a small circle, are as disagreeable as they are unavoidable. The superiour merit of one player is often detrimental to the interest of him who thinks himself a competitor. The loss of parts which the actor has played, and, perhaps, with approbation, for a considerable time, is attended with loss of reputation and diminution of income.

Quin, who had hitherto been esteemed the first actor in tragedy, could not conceal his uneasiness and disgust from the great success of Mr. Garrick. After he had been a spectator of his manner in some important character, which, I believe, was Richard the Third, he declared peremptorily, "That if the young fellow was right, he, and the rest of the players, had been all wrong;" and upon being told that Goodman's-fields theatre was crowded every night to see the new actor, he said, "That Garrick was a new religion; Whitfield was followed for a time; but they would all come to church again."

Mr. Garrick, who had a quick and happy talent in turning an epigram, gave this smart reply to Quin's bon mot :

Pope Quin, who damns all churches but his own,  
Complains that heresy infects the town ;  
That Whitfield Garrick has misled the age,  
And taints the sound religion of the stage :  
Schism, he cries, has turn'd the nation's brain ;  
But eyes will open, and to church again !  
Thou great infallible, forbear to roar,  
Thy bulls and errors are rever'd no more ;  
When doctrines meet with gen'ral approbation,  
It is not heresy, but reformation.

Colley Cibber, from whom more candour might have been expected, after he had seen Garrick's *Bayes*, which the publick esteemed a master piece of comick humour, said, "Garrick was well enough, but not superiour to his son *Theophilus*," who had little more to recommend him in the part than pertness and vivacity.

Mrs. Bracegirdle, a celebrated actress, who had left the stage for more than thirty years before Garrick's first appearance, and was visited by many persons of condition and taste, thought very differently of this rising genius. In a conversation which she had with Colley Cibber, who spoke of him, with an affected derogation, she reproved his malignity, and generously said, "Come, come, Cibber, tell me if there is not something like envy in your character of this young gentleman; the actor who pleases every body must be a man of merit." The old man felt the force of this sensible rebuke; he took a pinch of snuff, and frankly replied, "Why, 'faith, Bracey, I believe you are right, the young fellow is clever."

Mr. Garrick's weekly income was, at first, very moderate, not exceeding six or seven pounds. But when it was evident, that the great emoluments from the playhouse treasury, were chiefly, if not entirely, owing to his labours, and that the benches of the playhouse were almost always empty when his name was not seen in the playbills, Mr. Giffard very heartily concurred with Mr. Garrick and his friends to allow him a full moiety of the profits; and in this the manager found his advantage, for the actor was constantly employed in consequence of his being perpe-

tually admired. To a very long and fatiguing character in the play, he would frequently add another in a farce. The distresses which he raised in the audience by his *Lear* and *Richard*, he relieved with the roguish tricks of the *Lying Valet*, or the diverting humours of the *Schoolboy*.

## CHAPTER VI.

**Managers of Drury-lane and Covent-garden uneasy at the success of Goodman's-fields theatre....Threaten Giffard and Garrick with a law suit....They are engaged to Fleetwood....Mr. Garrick plays for Mrs. Harper at Drury-lane....Goes to Dublin....Returns to London.**

**IT** will not be thought strange, that the patentees of Drury-lane and Covent-garden theatres should be alarmed at the great deficiency in the receipts of their houses, and at the crowds which constantly filled the theatre of Goodman's-fields. Their well founded jealousy of Mr. Garrick's success caused them to unite their efforts to destroy the new raised seat of theatrical empire. For this purpose they intended to have recourse to law: an act of parliament, which had passed in the 11th year of his late Majesty, equally co-operated with the designs of the managers, and the passions of Sir John Barnard, one of the most respectable chief magistrates of London, who, it seems, had reasons of a private nature to incense him against the comedians of Goodman's-fields.

Thus supported, they intimidated the managers of Goodman's-fields, who were reduced to the necessity of making a kind of compromise with them.

In consequence of this, Mr. Garrick entered into a stated agreement with Fleetwood, patentee of Drury-lane, for the annual income of 500*l*. Giffard and his wife, soon after, made the best terms they could with the same proprietor.

But before the season closed, some time in April, Mr. Garrick generously offered his service to the widow of Mr. Harper, the comedian, who was then lately dead, to play for her benefit, in the Orphan. Chamont is a part which the principal players of that time had affected to slight, and seemed to consider as a bully of the tragick cast.

Polydore, from the spirit and gayety which Booth knew how to throw into it, was esteemed the principal character in the play. But it was no easy matter to assume the forcible elocution, and graceful deportment, of so accomplished an actor as Booth.—And, indeed, since his time, no man has had the good fortune to impose so happily upon an audience in Polydore. Besides, the more refined and elegant taste of modern spectators cannot relish the coarse language and brutal address of a lover, who, in the midst of his courtship, tells the lady, “That her soft tender limbs were made for yielding.”

Mr. Garrick saw in Chamont the rough soldier, the tender-hearted brother; the spirited young man, highly jealous of his own and his sister's honour. He saw too the sudden transitions from hot impetuous rage to the most sedate and temperate calmness, arising from the natural feelings of the heart, and depending upon just and interesting situations in the drama. His choice was well warranted by the full approbation of the audience.

During the time of his acting in Goodman's-fields, Mr. Garrick brought on the stage two dramattick pieces; the Lying Valet, a farce; and a dramattick satire, called Lethe; which are still acted with ap-

plause. The last was written before he commenced actor.

Before the end of the winter season of 1742, Mr. Garrick made an agreement with Mr. Fleetwood to share the profits arising from his acting *Richard the Third*, *Bayes*, and *King Lear*. The fame of our English *Roscus* was now so extended, that a deputation was sent from Ireland to invite him to act in Dublin, during the months of June, July, and August, upon very profitable conditions; these he embraced, and crossed the seas to the metropolis of Ireland, in June 1742, accompanied by Mrs. Woffington.

His success at Dublin exceeded all imagination, though much was expected from him; he was careased by all ranks of people, as a prodigy of theatrical perfection. During the hottest days in the year, the playhouse was crowded with persons of fashion and rank, who were never tired with seeing and applauding the various efforts of his skill.

The excessive heats became prejudicial to the frequenters of the theatre; and the epidemical distemper which seized, and carried off great numbers, was nicknamed the Garrick fever. Satisfied with the emoluments arising from the summer campaign, and delighted with the generous encouragement and kind countenance which the nobility and gentry of Ireland had given him, and of which he always spoke in the strongest terms of acknowledgment and gratitude, he set out for London, to renew his labours, and to receive the applause of the most critical, as well as most candid, audience in Europe.

## CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Garrick acting at Drury lane theatre.....His Abel Drugger compared with Cibber's.....His great attention to propriety of characters.....His Hamlet described.

**MR.** Garrick now considered himself in a different situation from that in which he had hitherto been placed. As manager and actor of Goodman's-fields playhouse, he thought himself warranted to act with somewhat less caution, and to venture at bolder hazards, than when he found himself ranked as the principal actor in the king's theatre of Drury-lane.

Several characters, which he had played with applause, he now relinquished from prudence and judgment; particularly Clodio in the Fop's Fortune, Lord Foppington in the Careless Husband, and Fondlewife in the Old Bachelor. Perhaps he was not entirely pleased with his representations of those parts; it is still more probable, that he did not wish either to offend, or risque a competition with either Woodward or Macklin, by acting characters to which they had a claim, not only by prescription, but the voice of the publick.

He was, indeed, by way of relief to his more toilsome labours in parts of exertion, induced to divert and relax himself with some low comick parts, and particularly Abel Drugger in Johnson's Alchymist. The younger Cibber had been for many years famous

for acting Abel; but Cibber was never commended for strictly adhering to nature in the drawing of his characters. Whether he had acquired a sort of extravagant manner, from his frequently playing ancient Pistol with applause; or, whether he imagined that every imposition upon the understanding of an audience, which happened to be applauded, was justifiable, I know not; but he mixed so much absurd grimace and ridiculous tricks in playing this part, that although the galleries laughed and clapped their hands, the judicious part of the spectators was displeased.

Garrick's Abel Drugger was of a different species from Cibber's. The moment he came upon the stage, he discovered such awkward simplicity, and his looks so happily bespoke the ignorant, selfish, and absurd tobacco merchant, that it was a contest not easily to be decided, whether the bursts of laughter or applause were loudest. Through the whole part he strictly preserved the modesty of nature.

To venture half prepared, as some imprudent actors have done, to represent a variety of characters, was not Mr. Garrick's practice. He examined well his strength before he undertook any arduous task.

Hamlet was a part which he knew the publick expected from him. He had prepared himself for the able discharge of this task, by having very carefully acted it in Ireland. I have promised to give a review of his principal characters in another place,\* and

\* Dramatick Miscellanies; or, A Review of the Principal Characters of Shakspeare, as represented by Mr. Garrick, and other celebrated Comedians; now preparing for the press.



shall therefore here only give a short draught of Garrick's playing Hamlet, with its effects.

When Mr. Garrick first saw the ghost, the terrour he seemed to be impressed with, was instantaneously communicated to the audience; his expostulations with the vision, though warm and importunate, were restrained by filial awe. The progress of his impassioned sensation, till the ghost beckoned him to retire with him, was accompanied with terrour and respect. His determination to obey the repeated invitation of the ghost, by action, to withdraw, was vehemently resolute; his following him awful and tremendous. The approbation of the audience, testified by the loudest applause, was continued till it was interrupted by Hamlet's returning with the ghost.

The great excellence of Garrick in Hamlet, and, indeed, in all parts which he represented, proceeded from his preserving consistency of character.

Hamlet is distinguished through the play for his filial piety, which he manifests by his excessive grief for the loss of a father whom he loved and venerated. Of this characteristic sign the great actor never lost sight.

The soliloquies of Shakspeare are discriminated from those of every other author. They conduct the business of the plot, not only with propriety, but vigour. They unfold the springs of action in the persons of the drama, with a warmth and energy not to be found in more correct and accurate writers.

The soliloquies of Hamlet are distinguished by peculiar and pathetick feelings of the mind; all the varieties of sentiment, impressed with passion, were de-

livered by Garrick with singular exertion. The strong intelligence of his eye, the animated expression of his whole countenance, the flexibility of his voice, and his spirited action, rivetted the attention of an admiring audience. Of all the soliloquies in this favourite play, in the speaking of which, I think, he most excelled, and which afforded him the amplest room to display his varied excellencies, was that which he spoke at the end of the second act, beginning thus,

O what a wretch, and peasant slave, am I !

## CHAPTER VIII.

Prelude to the revolt of the comedians of Drury-lane.....Fleetwood's character and conduct.....Account of his favourite diversions and companions.....Farms the theatre to his treasurer.....Mr. Garrick and several of the players secede from Drury-lane.....Their application to the lord chamberlain.....Their petition rejected.....Contest between Garrick and Macklin.....Theatrical storm.....Tancred and Sigismunda.....Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Cibber.

SUCH an actor as Garrick, whose name, when announced in the play-bills, operated like a charm, and drew multitudes to the theatre, of consequence considerably augmented the profits of the patentee.

But at the time when, in outward appearance, all was gay and splendid, and the theatre of Drury-lane seemed to be in the most flourishing condition; by the strange and absurd conduct of the manager, the whole fabrick was absolutely running into certain destruction.

Before I relate the immediate causes which brought on a revolt of the principal actors, with Mr. Garrick and Mr. Macklin at their head, it will be proper to take a view of the patentee's character and conduct.

Charles Fleetwood, Esq., was a gentleman of an ancient and respectable family, possessed of a large paternal estate. His person was genteel, and his manner elegant. His acquaintance, in the early part of life, with certain persons of rank and distinction, proved fatal to him; they drew him into many

fashionable irregularities and excesses; they gave him an unlucky and extravagant habit for play. Amongst those who are addicted to gaming, there are many young men of family and fortune, who are imprudent and undesigning; they generally fall a prey to the artful, the avaricious, and fraudulent: the betrayed, in their turns, become the betrayers; nor from this censure was Mr. Fleetwood exempted.

With the remains of his fortune he was persuaded, by some of his acquaintance, to purchase the greatest part of Drury-lane patent. He fortunately bought at a time when the proprietors, by a run of ill success, were become weary of their bargain, and willing to sell cheap what they had bought at a high price. They had weakly fallen out with the most esteemed of their players, on account of a small advance in salary, which they had demanded; the sum in dispute did not, I believe, much exceed 400*l.* per annum. The actors revolted, and opened the little theatre in the Hay-market with some appearance of success.

Fleetwood brought back the seceders, and united the two companies of Drury-lane and the Hay-market. When this was accomplished, he tried all methods to strengthen his troop, by gaining some actors of merit from Covent-garden theatre, with large and unusual offers. Mr. Quin was persuaded to leave his old master Rich, under whose theatrical banners he had fought twenty years, for the advantageous income of 500*l.*, a salary till then unknown in any English theatre. This was, indeed, to him an annual increase of 200*l.*; but it must be confessed that Quin offered to remain in his old station for a

less sum than that which Fleetwood offered to give him; but Rich refused the proposal, and declared that no actor was worth more than 300*l.* per annum.

For some years, by the prudent advice of the principal players, more especially, I believe, of Mr. Charles Macklin, who was the only player I ever heard of, that made acting a science; and the unre-mitted labours of this actor, Quin, Clive, Pritchard, and some others, the theatre at Drury-lane was in a state of considerable credit, and generally filled with the choicest company. But it was impossible to restrain so irregular and expensive a man as the patentee within the bounds of prudence and economy. After he had happily been obliged to forsake the practice of high play, and had deserted Arthur's,\* he was seized with an unaccountable passion for low diversion, and took a strange delight in the company of the meanest of the human species. This man of genteel address and polite manners conceived a peculiar fondness for the professors of the art of boxing; his time was divided between sturdy athleticks and ridiculous buffoons; between Broughton, James, and Taylor, the most eminent of our boxers, and the tumblers of Sadler's-Wells; the heroick combatants of Hockley in the Hole and the Bear-garden graced the patentee's levee almost every morning.

Some time before Mr. Garrick's engagement with this manager, he had brought all the inmates of Sadler's-Wells upon his stage, and entertained the publick with sights of tall monsters and contemptible rope-dancers.

\* Generally called White's Chocolate House.

Such a conductor of a theatre was unequal to the task of displaying to advantage the talents of a Garrick, or the humour of a Clive: or, indeed, of furnishing any rational entertainment for an enlightened publick. The profits which arose from the acting of his best plays were appropriated to his favourite amusements. The theatre was farmed to one Pierson, his treasurer, who had lent large sums of money to the manager. This fellow considered the merits of the best actors in no other view than as they contributed to the payment of his loan; the just and legal demands of the actors were treated by him with insolence and contempt: he was civil to Mr. Garrick, indeed, because he hoped, by his acting, to get back the money he had risked upon the patent.

In this distracted state of Fleetwood's management, the ill treatment of the players seemed to call aloud for redress. Bailiffs were often in possession of the theatre; and the properties, cloaths, and other stage ornaments of the comedians, were sometimes seized upon by these low implements of the law. Many ridiculous contests and foolish squabbles between the actors and these licensed harpies might here be recorded for the readers amusement; I shall content myself with relating one of them. The hat of King Richard the Third, by being adorned with jewels of paste, feathers, and other ornaments, seemed, to the sheriff's officers, a prey worthy of their seizure; but honest Davy, Mr. Garrick's Welch servant, told them, they did not know what they were about; "For, look you," said Davy, "that hat belongs to the king." The fellows imagining that

what was meant of Richard the Third was spoken of George the Second, resigned their prey, though with some reluctance.

Repeated, but ineffectual applications, were made to the patentee, for removal of grievances, by Garrick, Macklin, Pritchard, and others. It is true, he did not treat their remonstrances with haughtiness as his treasurer did; he listened to their addresses with great calmness, as well as affability; he owned the justice of their representations, and the rectitude of their demands; he was most heartily sorry, he protested, for what was past, and promised very solemnly to reform every thing that was amiss.—Fleetwood was so polite a man, and so framed to deceive, by the most winning and gentle behaviour, always assuming such an air of candour and self-reproach, that it was impossible to leave him in anger. Fair promises frequently made, and as often broken, will tire out the most patient tempers; the clamours of the actors, but especially those who had no means of subsistence but their weekly income, were now so loud and urgent, that it became necessary to look about in earnest for some means of substantial redress.

About the end of the summer 1743, the actors found leisure to digest a plan for removing the grievances under which they had so long patiently suffered. About a dozen of them, the chief of whom were Garrick, Macklin, Havard, Berry, Blakes, Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Clive, with Mills, and his wife, entered into an association, to which others were invited. A formal agreement was signed, by which

they obliged themselves not to accede to any terms which might be proposed to them by the patentee, without the consent of all the subscribers.

The players were in hopes that the lord chamberlain would be induced to grant them his favour and protection; and, in imitation of one of his predecessors, the witty and benevolent earl of Dorset, who rescued Betterton, Mrs. Barry, and other aggrieved actors, from the tyranny and oppression of Christopher Rich, the old patentee of Drury-lane playhouse, grant them a license or patent for acting plays at the Opera-house, or elsewhere. They drew up a petition, in which they stated their grievances very exactly, and supported their claim to redress from a variety of facts which they offered to prove.

The duke of Grafton, who was then chamberlain, received the petition of the players with coldness; instead of examining into the merits of their complaints, he desired to know the amount of their annual stipends. He was much surprised to be informed, that a man could gain, merely by playing, the yearly salary of 500*l*. His grace observed, that a near relation of his, who was then an inferiour officer in the navy, exposed his life in behalf of his king and country for less than half that sum. All attempts to convince the duke that justice and right were on the side of the petitioners, were to no purpose.

It requires but little art of reasoning to confute the duke's argument: his attempt to compare a principal actor's income with that of a subaltern officer, was very ill founded: every gentleman that would wish to rise in the fleet or the army, is obliged to go



through the several gradations of preferment; but the midshipman and the cadet both hope to rise to the highest office which they can possibly attain. Besides, genius steps beyond the tedious formalities of progressive service and limited practice. Hawke, Howe, and Keppel, were forced to serve in the navy some time before they attained to the rank of lieutenant; Garrick, Clive, and Cibber, from the first trial of their abilities, proved themselves accomplished comedians.

But I have reason to suppose, that the chamberlain had conceived a prejudice against the petition of the players from the behaviour of Colley Cibber, who had some years before made a like effort to obtain a patent; and the glaring injustice of the old man's request had, perhaps, too much weight with the chamberlain upon an occasion very dissimilar.

In 1733, Colley Cibber sold his share in the patent of Drury-lane theatre to John Highmore, Esq.; for a very considerable sum of money.\* Cibber, a few months, or, perhaps, weeks, after he had signed and sealed with Mr. Highmore, from the sole pretence of Theophilus Cibber not being rewarded according to his merit by the purchaser of the patent, solicited the duke of Grafton for a new grant in behalf of his son. The injury intended to Highmore by this new patent appeared so flagrant in the eyes of the chamberlain, who before had always looked

\* This gentleman, to gain a trifling wager at a coffee-house, had exposed himself on Drury-lane stage, in the part of Lothario. The patience of the audience, and the flattery of his friends, induced him to venture once more on a theatre, in the part of Torrismond, in the Spanish Friar—very much to his disreputation.

upon Colley in a favourable light, that he rejected his petition with strong marks of disapprobation.

Whilst the players were busy in gaining friends to their cause,<sup>3</sup> and to promote their success with the lord chamberlain, the patentee was not idle ; he endeavoured to raise recruits amongst all the itinerant actors in England. Before they proceeded to greater hostilities, each party strove to justify their cause by appealing to the publick from the press. Paul Whitehead, it is said, drew his pen for the manager ; and William Guthrie, the historian, was the champion for Mr. Garrick and his party.

Towards the middle of September, the manager was determined to open his theatre ; but, on mustering his forces, he found himself so weak, that he could scarce act any play whatever. But upon being joined by Mrs. Bennet, an useful actress, whom he suspected to be gone over to the revolvers, and by the assistance of some new raised forces, he announced in his playbills the *Conscious Lovers*, for September the 20th, the usual time of beginning to act plays in the metropolis.

The compassion of the publick, the efforts of friends, and motives of curiosity, concurred to bring together a pretty full audience ; and the play, though but tolerably acted, passed with applause. The contest between the manager and the seceders became soon very unequal. The latter found all applications for a new patent ineffectual. There was now no remedy left, but to agree with the manager upon the best terms that could be obtained. The matter ended, as it might have been foreseen, from the moment the

chamberlain turned his back upon the players. Some of the principal actors, and such as were absolutely necessary to the conducting of the theatrical machine, were admitted to favour upon reasonable terms, and were allowed the same annual stipends which they enjoyed before the secession; others of less consequence were abridged of half their income.

The manager ascribed this revolt of the players principally to Mr. Macklin; and him he determined to punish for his ingratitude, for such he termed his conduct in this transaction. To the rest, upon the terms I have related, he was reconciled; but eternal banishment from his theatre was the doom which he pronounced on the man who had been once his favourite adviser, and his bosom friend. Macklin saw all the inconvenience which he must feel from this sentence of his quondam patron being put into execution. He had no inclination to become the scape-goat in this business; and he urged Mr. Garrick to perfect the articles of their agreement, by which it was covenanted, that neither of the contracting parties should accommodate matters with the patentee without a comprehension of the other.

Mr. Garrick could not but acknowledge the justice of Macklin's plea; he declared that he was ready to do all in his power to fulfil his agreement; but as the manager continued obstinate in his resolution to exclude Mr. Macklin, it could not reasonably be expected that he should, by an obstinate perseverance in a desperate contest, greatly injure his own fortune, and absolutely be the means of starving eight or ten people, whose fate depended on his accommodating the

dispute with Fleetwood. He offered Mr. Macklin a sum to be paid weekly out of his own income, for a certain time, till the manager could be brought into better temper, or he should have it in his power to provide for himself, in a manner suitable to his rank in the theatre. He obtained a promise of Mr. Rich to give Mrs. Macklin a weekly salary of 3*l*. These proposals were strenuously rejected by Macklin, who persisted in his claim of Mr. Garrick's absolutely fulfilling the tenour of their compact.

Mr. Garrick, notwithstanding the perseverance of Macklin, accepted Fleetwood's proposals; and entered into covenant with him, for that season, at a very considerable income, I believe 6 or 700*l*.

Mr. Garrick's appearance in the part of Bayes in the Rehearsal was previously announced in the play-bills and the newspapers. In the mean time both parties prepared for war; the one to assault with vehemence, the other to repel with violence. A large party, with Dr. Barrowby at their head, espoused the cause of Macklin; their reasons for so doing were certainly very specious; they said, it was not only a great hardship, but an act of injustice, to deprive so valuable an actor as Macklin of the means of supporting himself and family, for a matter of mere resentment; nor ought the publick to abandon a man whose acting they so much approved; one too, who, by his excellent lessons, was continually increasing the number of good comedians: that, in a general act of indemnity, *he* alone should be exempted, was a matter of peevish malevolence in the patentee, in which *he*

ought not to be indulged. Pens were drawn now, as before, in support of the two parties. A pamphlet was published in behalf of Mr. Macklin, which has been ascribed to Corbyn Morris: it was allowed, by the answerer, to be well written, and to contain in it a great charm of words. I have authority to say that Mr. Morris was not the author of that pamphlet, which, indeed, is well written, but its merit consists in the closeness of reasoning from authenticity of facts; and it may, perhaps, with more truth, be attributed to Mr. Macklin himself, who likewise addressed the publick in a very short and judicious appeal, which was distributed to the spectators of the Rehearsal: in this he endeavoured to invalidate Mr. Fleetwood's accusation of ingratitude. Mr. Guthrie offered himself again to be the advocate on the other side. The patentee, who trusted more to the arm of flesh than the ablest defence of the greatest writer, was now determined to try the courage of his friends of Hockley in the Hole. They and their associates were distributed in great plenty in the pit and galleries, armed with sticks and bludgeons, with positive orders from their commanding officer to check the zeal of Macklin's friends by the weightiest arguments in their power. When the curtain drew up, the playhouse shewed more like a bear garden than a theatre-royal. The sea in a storm seemed not more terrible and boisterous than the loud and various noises which issued from the pit, galleries, and boxes.

As soon as Mr. Garrick entered, he bowed very low several times, and, with the most submissive action, entreated to be heard. He was saluted with

loud hisses, and continual cries of "Off! off! off!" Peas were thrown upon the stage, to render walking on it insecure and dangerous.

The contending parties strove as much to annoy one another, as the mob do at elections, who espouse the cause of different candidates. During the first night of this struggle for victory, nothing was heard but hisses, groans, cat-calls, and all manner of uncommon and outrageous clamour and uproar. All Mr. Garrick's attempts to pacify them were rejected with outrage.

This theatrical tempest lasted two nights. The obstinacy of the manager at length prevailed; the ardour of Macklin's party began to relax; the universal inclination to see Mr. Garrick act, got the ascendant over all opposition, and put a period to the disturbance. The trouble and anxiety which Garrick brought upon himself, during this disagreeable contest, proceeded from a conduct which, in a greater or less degree, pursued him through life; the precipitancy of his temper often hurried him into engagements, which he either could, or would not, and, indeed, sometimes, ought not, to fulfil.

I believe it was during this winter of 1743, that Mr. Garrick became acquainted with Mr. Pitt, afterwards earl of Chatham, and George lord Lyttleton, who continued ever after to treat him as their friend and companion. The first addressed him in a poetical epistle, quoted in the Appendix to this narrative; the other paid him very elegant and just compliments upon his acting, in his Dialogues of the Dead.

These great persons had taken upon themselves the patronage of 'Thompson's *Tancred and Sigismunda*; under their direction and influence it was acted at Drury-lane. The parts were disposed of to great advantage, to Garrick, Sheridan, Delane, Mrs. Cibber, and Miss Budgell, the natural daughter of the famous Eustace Budgell, who, about 43 years since, threw himself into the Thames. This unhappy man had endeavoured, it is said, to prevail on his daughter to go in the boat with him, the day on which he was drowned. Miss Budgell was of very low stature; but her understanding was good, her ear critically nice, and her voice musical; she spoke with propriety and sensibility. She died about 25 years since at Bath.

The two great statesmen, Pitt and Lyttleton, attended the rehearsal of *Tancred and Sigismunda* with great assiduity; they had a sincere value for the amiable author. Their instructions were heard by the players with great respect, and embraced with implicit confidence. The play was well acted in all its parts; but its success depended chiefly upon the two principal characters, acted by Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Cibber, who were formed by nature for the illustration of each other's talents. In their persons they were both somewhat below the middle size; he was, though short, well made; she, though in her form not graceful and scarcely genteel, was, by the elegance of her manner and symmetry of her features, rendered very attractive. From similarity of complexion, size and countenance, they could have been easily supposed to be brother and sister;

but in the powerful expression of the passions, they still approached to a nearer resemblance. He was master of all the passions, but more particularly happy in the exhibition of parts where anger, resentment, disdain, horror, despair, and madness, predominated. In love, grief, and tenderness, she greatly excelled all competitors ; and was also unrivalled in the more ardent emotions of jealous love and frantick rage, which she expressed with a degree of sensibility in voice, look, and action, that never failed to draw tears from the most unfeeling.



## CHAPTER IX.

Fleetwood sells the remaining term of his patent, which is purchased by two bankers....Mr. James Lacy admitted a third sharer....Mr. Garrick's second voyage to Dublin....Mr. Sheridan's success in acting ..He obliges Quin to leave Dublin....Messrs. Sheridan and Garrick joint managers....Their success....Mr. Barry's first acting, and reception from the audience....Mr. Garrick returns to England....Plays at Mr. Rich's theatre, and shares the profits with the manager.

**I**N the year 1745, Mr. Fleetwood grew tired with a manner of living which brought with it nothing but continual vexation and anxiety. Perpetually harassed with the importunate claims of a hundred creditors, he suffered the painful sensation of being obliged to make his house a place of confinement. He was at last prevailed upon to advertise the remaining term of his patent, which was then reduced to about three or four years, with a view to pay off his most pressing incumbrances, that he might be enabled to retire to some place on the continent, where he could live decently on the shipwreck of his fortune. Two bankers, Green and Amber, became the purchasers, and admitted Mr. James Lacy to a third share, on condition that he would undertake the management of the theatre, and mortgage his portion of the patent till the profits should have enabled him to discharge the debt.

The sum they paid for their morsel of the patent was 3,200*l*. Mr. Garrick, I believe, was invited to

accede to the treaty, in any manner which he thought agreeable; but he saw the precarious situation of the theatre at that time, and did not care to risk his fortune and his labour at so alarming a period, when England was threatened with a rebellion, which was then actually broken out in Scotland. He was determined to pay a second visit to Ireland.

Mr. Lacy was extremely offended at Mr. Garrick's refusing to play at Drury-lane; and wrote to the proprietors of the Dublin theatre, in such terms, relating to his engagement there, as gave Mr. Garrick great offence.

But these proprietors had, by a formal writing, given the entire management of the Dublin stage to Mr. Thomas Sheridan, the son of Dr. Thomas Sheridan, the friend of the celebrated Dean Swift. This gentleman, either led by his own inclination, or invited by the example and success of Mr. Garrick, resolved to try his talent for acting on the Irish stage, about a year after Mr. Garrick had stepped on the London theatre. His attempts were answerable to the most ardent expectations of himself and friends. So great was his influence over the Dublin audience, that Quin, who arrived in that city during the first warm glow of Mr. Sheridan's prosperity, with an intention to act a certain number of characters, and put a handsome sum of money in his pocket, (a custom which he had often practised) was obliged to quit that metropolis with disgust, if not disgrace.—He was told by the proprietors that all the acting days, during the remainder of the winter, were engaged to the new actor.

In 1743, Mr. Sheridan had acted several parts at Drury-lane, and a sort of competition, or rivalry, was set up between him and Mr. Garrick by officious friends: this occasioned a quarrel between them, which was unreconciled when Sheridan left London. However, he knew and acknowledged the worth of Mr. Garrick; and as soon as he heard of his intention to visit Ireland, he wrote him a letter to this purpose, "That he was then sole manager of the Irish stage, and should be very happy to see him in Dublin; he would give him all advantages and encouragement which he could in reason expect." He made an offer to divide all profits with him, from their united representations, after deducting the incurred expenses. He told him, at the same time, that he must expect nothing from his friendship, for he owed him none; but all that the best actor had a right to command, he might be very certain should be granted.

Mr. Garrick was at colonel Wyndham's when he received this letter; after looking it over, he put it into that gentleman's hand, saying, "This is the oddest epistle I ever saw in my life." "It may be an odd one, (the colonel replied, after he had perused it) but it is surely an honest one: I would certainly depend upon a man that treated me with that openness and simplicity of heart."

When Mr. Garrick arrived at Dublin, he soon had a meeting with Mr. Sheridan, who offered to fulfil his promise of sharing profit and loss; but the former insisted upon a stipulated sum for playing during the winter. The other objected to the demand,

and persisted in his first proposal, which, he said, was most reasonable ; for then he would receive as much money as he earned, and others would not be losers, when he, perhaps, might be the only gainer. After some little dispute, which Sheridan decided by taking out his watch and insisting upon an answer in a few minutes, Mr. Garrick submitted. The principal characters were divided between them ; sometimes they acted parts of importance alternately, such as Hamlet, and Richard the Third. To give a peculiar strength to the tragedy of Othello, they for several nights acted the parts of the Moor and Iago by turns. The Irish theatre this year was more splendid and more frequented than usual.

Lord Chesterfield, then lord lieutenant, bespoke plays very frequently ; but though he was very gracious to Mr. Sheridan, and often admitted his visits at the castle, he took not the least notice of Mr. Garrick ; nay, when they both waited on him with candles in their hands, on the night of Mr. Garrick's benefit, he spoke very kindly to Mr. Sheridan, but did not even return the salute of the other. It seems his lordship, when in Ireland, had a mind to convince the people of that kingdom, that his heart was entirely Irish. When residing at Dublin, he gave intimation that he would encourage Mr. Sheridan's plan of an academy for teaching oratory, in these expressive words, "Never let the thought of your oratorical institution go out of your mind." But when Mr. Sheridan, some few years afterwards, waited upon him in London, with an expectation that he would fulfil his promise, and be one of his great pa-

trons in his intended scheme, he received him coldly, and gave him a guinea, as his sole contribution to an oratorical academy.

During the management of the Dublin stage by Garrick and Sheridan, a genius started up, whose eminence in heroick characters, and whose excellence in scenes of love, tenderness, and all the mingled passions of the soul, has been greatly and justly celebrated. Barry was certainly one of the most pathetick lovers of the English stage, and I suppose not inferiour to Montford, so highly praised by Colley Cibber.

Othello was the character in which Barry chose to give the earliest proof of his genius for acting. After much allowance made to a raw and unexperienced adventurer, and the terrours of a first night's performance, all the criticks with one consent declared, they had never seen, on that stage, such a noble first essay, nor such an early promise of future excellence. Mr. Lacy, manager of Drury-lane theatre, who went on purpose to Dublin to raise forces for Drury-lane theatre, was present at Barry's Othello, and immediately hired him at a very considerable income. Mr. Garrick was so pleased with this actor's merit, that he bore testimony to it in several letters which he wrote to his friends in London; assuring them, that he was the best lover he had ever seen on the stage.

Satiated with caresses from all ranks of people, and after having considerably added to his stock of money, Mr. Garrick left Ireland, and arrived in London May 1746.

Mr. Rich was persuaded by his friends to seize the favourable opportunity of closing his theatrical campaign with eclat, and with advantage to himself, as well as honour and emolument to Mr. Garrick, by bargaining with him to act five or six nights, and to share with him the profits. This manager had no objection to getting a round sum of money, but he wished not to obtain it through the medium of Mr. Garrick's acting : however, his interest stared him so broadly in the face, that he condescended to put some hundreds of pounds in his pocket, through a channel which he disliked.

Frederick, prince of Wales, commanded three plays, for the entertainment of his brother-in-law, the prince of Hesse ; two of which were *Othello* and the *Beaux' Stratagem* ; in the first Mr. Garrick acted *Othello*, a character in which he never after appeared ; in the *Stratagem*, he played *Archer*.

## CHAPTER X.

Revolution in the theatrical world.....Garrick, Quin, Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard, at Covent-garden....Barry, Mrs. Woffington, Macklin, and Mrs. Clive, at Drury-lane.....Characters of John Rich and James Lacy.....The rise of pantomime.....The different success of the theatres.....Mr. Garrick purchases the moiety of Drury-lane patent....Profits of Covent-garden, 1747.

IN 1747, the publick was entertained with a larger portion of theatrical emulation, and a greater display of histrionical abilities, than usual. Quin had withdrawn himself from the stage for more than a year. In a poem of his friend James Thompson, called the *Castle of Indolence*, published about this period, he was reminded of his inactivity, and called upon, under the name of *Æsopus*, to rouse himself, and shake off his love of ease. Mrs. Cibber, notwithstanding the constant wishes of the publick to see her, had been unemployed for some time. Upon Mr. Garrick's arrival from Ireland, the principal actors seemed to have laid aside their inactivity; they all manifested an uncommon ardour to exert their abilities to the utmost.

The managers of Drury-lane and Covent-garden, John Rich, Esq., and Mr. James Lacy, were men so very different in their tempers, that, before I relate the principal incidents of the ensuing season, I will endeavour to give the reader some idea of their characters.

John Rich, the son of Christopher Rich, formerly patentee of Drury-lane theatre, seems to have imbibed, from his very early years, a dislike of the people with whom he was destined to live and daily converse. We are told, that his father wished rather to acquire wealth by French dancers, Italian singers, and every other exotick exhibition, than by the united skill of the most accomplished comedians. The son inherited the same odd taste ; for, being left by his father in the joint possession of the patent with his brother Christopher, and after having ineffectually tried his talent for acting in the part of the Earl of Essex, and some other important character, he applied himself to the study of pantomimical representation. In this he was happily very fortunate. He formed a kind of harlequinade, very different from that which is seen at the opera comique in Paris, where harlequin and all the characters speak ; and a kind of droll farce, full of ridiculous incidents and *bon mots*, called *naivetés*, keep the audience in continual laughter. In the first years of his management at Lincoln's-inn-fields theatre, Mr. Rich struggled with a great many difficulties : he was very young and inexperienced ; and the governing players, Bullock, Keen, and others, considered him as one very unfit to give laws to them, and manage the business of a theatre. The ill fortune of the new house, which was, in 1714, opened in opposition to the well established company of Drury-lane, contributed not a little to heighten the usual disgust of the patentee and his actors.



To retrieve the credit of his theatre, Rich created a species of dramatick composition unknown to this, and, I believe, to any other country, which he called a pantomime: it consisted of two parts, one serious and the other comick. By the help of gay scenes, fine habits, grand dances, appropriated musick, and other decorations, he exhibited a story from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, or some other fabulous writer: between the pauses or acts of this serious representation, he interwove a comick fable, consisting chiefly of the courtship of Harlequin and Columbine, with a variety of surprising adventures and tricks, which were produced by the magick wand of Harlequin; such as the sudden transformations of palaces and temples to huts and cottages; of men and women into wheel-barrows and joint-stools; of trees turned to houses; colonnades to beds of tulips; and mechanicks' shops into serpents and ostriches. It would be idle to dwell long upon a subject which almost every body is as familiar with as the writer.

It is a very singular circumstance, that of all the pantomimes which Rich brought on the stage, from the Harlequin Sorcerer, in the year 1717, to the last which was exhibited a year before his death, which fell out in 1761, there was scarce one which failed to please the publick, who testified their approbation of them forty or fifty nights successively. And, in spite of all the rhetorick of Colley Cibber in his *Apology for his Life*, and some graver criticks, the pantomime is a kind of stage entertainment which will always give more delight to a mixed company than the best speaking farce that can be composed.

Mr. Lacy, the rival of Mr. Rich, was a man of good understanding, uncultivated by education; his notions of business were clear, and his observations on men and manners judicious; he was liberal in his sentiments, though rough and sometimes boisterous in his language; he was one whom no repulses of fortune, or checks of disappointment, could intimidate or divert from his purpose. By a succession of schemes he endeavoured to attain affluence and independence. The first dawn of his prosperity he owed to his projecting the rotunda of Ranelagh, about forty years since, which gained him the sum of 4000*l*. This building is a standing monument of his taste and ingenuity. His being appointed manager for the bankers, who purchased the remainder of Mr. Fleetwood's patent, with a third of his own, advanced him still higher to publick notice; and the misfortunes of these men, owing perhaps to an utter desertion of theatrical entertainments, in the year of the Scotch rebellion in 1745, were occasionally the making of his fortune; for having, during the time he was a manager, frequently attended the duke of Grafton, then lord chamberlain, in his hunting parties, he so far ingratiated himself in his grace's favour, that he afterwards, at the expiration of the old patent, obtained on very reasonable terms a new one, the half of which Mr. Garrick purchased.

Mr. Lacy was active and enterprising. He brought Barry from Ireland; and, at the same time, secured Macklin, Yates, Berry, Beard, Neale, Taswell, Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Woffington, Mr. and Mrs. Giffard, and others. He appeared so formidable to Rich, that, by

the advice of his counsellors, he immediately entered into a treaty with Mr. Garrick, Mr. Quin, and Mrs. Cibber. Mrs. Pritchard, Messrs. Woodward, Chapman, Hippiusley, and Mrs. Green, he had already bound to himself by articles.

It is not, perhaps, more difficult to settle the covenants of a league between mighty monarchs, than to adjust the preliminaries of a treaty in which the high and potent princes and princesses of a theatre are the parties. Mr. Garrick and Mr. Quin had too much sense and temper to squabble about trifles.—After one or two previous and friendly meetings, they selected such characters as they intended to act, without being obliged to join in the same play. Some parts were to be acted by them alternately, particularly Richard the Third and Othello. The great difficulty lay in choosing such plays as they might both appear in to advantage. The following parts they consented, as far as I can recollect, to act together, Lothario and Horatio in the Fair Penitent; in Jane Shore, Hastings and Gloster; in Henry the Fourth, (first part) Hotspur and Falstaff; in the Distressed Mother, Orestes, Garrick; Pyrrhus, Quin; and, I believe, Brutus and Cassius in Julius Cæsar. I have seen the character of Cassius accurately delineated in Mr. Garrick's own hand-writing, which he had extracted from Bayle; and it is very probable that he had given his consent to act the part, but, that, on serious reflection, he had renounced his intention, as the weight of applause, in the much admired scene between these great men in the fourth act of the play, must have fallen to the share of Bru-

tus. There was another reason for rejecting Cassius, which, in all probability, had its force with him; he would never willingly put on the Roman habit.

Mr. Quin soon found, that his competition with Mr. Garrick, whose reputation was hourly increasing, whilst his own was on the decline, would soon become ineffectual. His Richard the Third could scarce draw together a decent appearance of company in the boxes; and he was, with some difficulty, tolerated in the part, when Garrick acted the same character to crowded houses, and with very great applause.

The town had often wished to see these great actors fairly matched in two characters of almost equal importance. The Fair Penitent presented an opportunity to display their several merits; though it must be owned, that the balance was as much in favour of Quin, as the advocate of virtue is superiour in argument to the defender of libertinism.

The shouts of applause when Horatio and Lothario met on the stage together in the second act, were so loud, and so often repeated, before the audience permitted them to speak, that the combatants seemed to be disconcerted. It was observed that Quin changed colour, and Garrick seemed to be embarrassed; and, it must be owned, that these actors were never less masters of themselves, than on the first night of the contest for pre-eminence. Quin was too proud to own his feelings on the occasion; but Mr. Garrick was heard to say, "'Faith, I believe Quin was as much frightened as myself."

The play was repeatedly acted, and with constant applause, to very brilliant audiences ; nor is it to be wondered at ; for, besides the novelty of seeing the two rival actors in the same tragedy, the Fair Penitent was admirably played by Mrs. Cibber.

Notwithstanding the evident disparity arising from one actors pleading the cause of truth and virtue, and the other being engaged on the side of licentiousness and profligacy, Mr. Quin was, in the opinion of the best judges, fairly defeated ; by striving to do too much, he missed the mark at which he aimed. The character of Horatio is compounded of deliberate courage, warm friendship, and cool contempt of vice. The last Quin had in a superiour degree, but could not rise to an equal expression of the other two.— The strong emphasis which he stamped on almost every word in a line, robbed the whole of that ease and graceful familiarity, which should have accompanied the elocution and action of a man who is calmly chastising a vain and audacious boaster.

When Lothario gave Horatio the challenge, Quin, instead of accepting it instantaneously, with the determined and unembarrassed brow of superiour bravery, made a long pause, and dragged out the words,

“ I'll meet thee there !”

in such a manner as to make it appear absolutely ludicrous. He paused so long before he spoke, that somebody, it was said, called out from the gallery, “ Why don't you tell the gentleman whether you will meet him or not ?”

When the same actors came on the stage in *Jane Shore*, Hastings is so visibly superiour in every part of excellence to Gloster, who is a kind of bastard Richard the Third, that it would be unfair to insist upon Mr. Garrick's pre-eminence in the play. Indeed Mr. Quin, in acting a part so below his rank in the theatre, proved himself a good commonwealthsman, and a better friend to his employer than himself. This character of Gloster he used to call one of his strut and whisker parts.

In Shakspeare's *Henry the Fourth*, Quin's Falstaff had greatly the advantage of Garrick's Hotspur. I shall elsewhere\* endeavour to prove why Hotspur was a part which Mr. Garrick should not have chosen. Indeed his judgment soon saw the impropriety of his acting it, and he never resumed the part after he had played it a few nights. Such was the general satisfaction which Quin gave the publick in Falstaff, that though Mr. Garrick was taken ill after the fifth night of his acting Hotspur, the play was not interrupted: Mr. Havard was his successor, during the remainder of the time it was acted. Havard, though not a powerful, was yet a pleasing actor; and his general attention to business, and amiable character, recommended him powerfully to the good will of the audience. The play was acted very often. The success of the *Lying Valet* and *Lethe* induced Mr. Garrick to try his fortune once more as a writer; and *Miss in her Teens* was the produce of his muse; a farce, in which cowardice

\* Dramatick Miscellany.

and effeminacy are so happily contrasted, and strongly ridiculed, that it will for a long time maintain its ground in the theatre. This petit-piece was acted a great number of nights. Mr. Quin was called upon to play some of his characters during its representation. He complied at first, but soon after repented : he surlily swore he would not hold up the tail of any farce. " Nor shall he," said Mr. Garrick, when he was told what Quin had said ; " I will give him a month's holidays." He picked out of the prompter's list of plays all such as could be acted without Quin, and were not supposed to have any internal strength to draw company of themselves. To these Miss in her Teens was tacked every night for above a month, or five weeks. Quin would sometimes, during the run of the farce, pay a visit to the theatre ; but on being told that the house was crowded, he would give a significant growl, and withdraw.

Dr. Hoadly, in his comedy of the Suspicious Husband, shewed Mr. Garrick in a new and very advantageous light. Ranger is a young fellow vicious by custom, and irregular through fashion ; but honest, benevolent, and humane, from temper and inclination. The very situations of this character, arising from many happy embarrassments, produced infinite entertainment, and brought Rich a great number of audiences. Mr. Garrick wrote the prologue and epilogue. Mr. Quin was offered the part of the Suspicious Husband, which he refused : he had the mortification to see an inferiour actor, Bridgewater, much admired and applauded in it. Quin paid him an awkward compliment upon his success in the part.

The great run of company to Covent-garden left Drury-lane in a state of inferiority and despondency. Mr. Lacy knew that the possession of a patent was of little avail without the power to make it advantageous to him. He saw that the great theatrical loadstone was Mr. Garrick, who could, without the assistance of any great actors, always draw after him the best company, and fill the boxes. Lacy having too, about this time, prevailed on the duke of Grafton to promise a renewal of the Drury-lane patent, he wisely thought, the best way to secure so valuable an acquisition as Mr. Garrick, would be to offer him the moiety of it. This he well knew was a proposition worthy of acceptance ; and, in case he closed with the offer, would render the other moiety of greater value to himself than the whole would be without such a partner.

The tender of so considerable and valuable a thing as the half of a patent, was by no means displeasing to Mr. Garrick ; he consulted his friends, who all advised him to purchase it on reasonable terms. By paying the moderate sum of eight thousand pounds, he became joint patentee of Drury-lane theatre with Mr. Lacy. This transaction was finished to the satisfaction of both parties, about the end of March, or beginning of April, 1747.

Mr. Rich, though he was visibly acquiring very large property by such a constant succession of good houses, and principally by the means of his actors, did not seem to enjoy or understand the happiness of his situation. It was imagined, by those who knew his humour best, that he would have been better pleased



to see his great comedians shew away to empty benches, that he might have had an opportunity to mortify their pride, by bringing out a new pantomime, and drawing the town after his rareeshow. Often would he take a peep at the house through the curtain, and as often, from disappointment and disgust, arising from the view of a full audience, break out into the following expressions, "What, are you there! Well, much good may it do you."

Though he might have easily fixed Mr. Garrick in his service, long before he had bargained for a share of Drury-lane patent, he gave himself no concern; when he was told of a matter so fatal to his interest; he rather seemed to consider it as a release from a disagreeable engagement, and consoled himself with mimicking the great actor. It was a ridiculous sight to see the old man upon his knees, repeating Lear's curse to his daughter, after Garrick's manner, as he termed it; while some of the players, who stood round him, gave him loud applauses; and others, though they were obliged to join in the general approbation, heartily pitied his folly, and despised his ignorance.

I am authorized to assert, that the profits arising from plays at Covent-garden theatre, from September 1746, to the end of May, 1747, amounted to eight thousand five hundred pounds. And let no man think this an exorbitant sum, which was earned by a Garrick, in conjunction with many excellent comedians, when it can be proved, that in one year, after paying all expenses, eleven thousand pounds were the produce of Mr. Maddocks (the straw-man's) agility, added to the inferiour talents of the players, at the same house, some few years after.

## CHAPTER XI.

The managers of Drury-lane divide their several provinces...Mr. Garrick's particular emoluments....Mr. Rich deserted by the best part of his company, who engage themselves to Mr. Lacy and Mr. Garrick...Prologue on opening Drury-lane theatre....Revival of *Every Man in his Humour*....*Macbeth*, as originally written....*Romeo and Juliet* acted at both theatres.

**MR.** Garrick and Mr. Lacy divided the business of the theatre in such a manner as not to encroach upon each other's province. Mr. Lacy took upon himself the care of the wardrobe, the scenes, and the economy of the household; while Mr. Garrick regulated the more important business of treating with authors, hiring actors, distributing parts in plays, superintending of rehearsals, &c. Besides the profits accruing from his half share, he was allowed an income of 500*l.* for his acting, and some particular emoluments for altering plays, farces, &c.

Such was the confidence which the players had in Mr. Garrick's abilities, that he had his choice of the most eminent amongst them, except Mr. Quin, who retired to Bath. Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, and many others, immediately entered into articles with the patentees of Drury-lane. Rich was almost deserted, and, I believe, did not recover from his surprise and inactivity till very late in the season, when he brought out a favourite piece of mummery that drew vast crowds to it.

September 20th, Mr. Garrick opened the playhouse of Drury-lane, and apoke a prologue, which was written by Samuel Johnson ; the omission of which in this place, no man, who had read it a hundred times, would pardon.

When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes  
First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakspeare rose ;  
Each change of many colour'd life he drew,  
Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new :  
Existence saw him spurn her boundled reign,  
And punting Time toil'd after him in vain.  
His powerful strokes presiding Truth impress'd,  
And unresisting passion storm'd the breast.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,  
To please in method, and invent by rule ;  
His studious patience, and laborious art,  
By regular approach assail'd the heart :  
Cold approbation gave the ling'ring bays,  
For those who durst not censure, scarce could praise.  
A mortal born, he met the general doom,  
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.  
The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,  
Nor wish'd for Jonson's art, or Shakspeare's flame ;  
Themselves they studied, as they felt, they writ' ;  
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit.  
(Vice always found a sympathetick friend,  
They pleas'd their age, and did not aim to mend.  
Yet bards like these aspir'd to lasting praise,  
And proudly hop'd to pimp in future days.  
Their cause was gen'ral, their supports were strong,  
Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long ;  
Till Shame regain'd the post that Sense betray'd,  
And Vir'tue call'd Oblivion to her aid.

Then crush'd by rules, and weaken'd as refin'd,  
For years the power of tragedy declin'd :  
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,  
Till Declamation roar'd while Passion slept.

Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,  
 Philosophy remain'd, though Nature fled.  
 But forc'd at length her ancient reign to quit,  
 She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of Wit ;  
 Exulting Folly hail'd the joyful day,  
 And pantomime and song confirm'd her sway.

But who the coming changes can presage,  
 And mark the future period of the stage ?  
 Perhaps, if skill could distant times explore,  
 New Behns, new Durfleys, yet remain in store.  
 Perhaps, where Lear has rav'd, and Hamlet dy'd,  
 On flying cars new sorcerers may ride,  
 Perhaps (for who can guess the effects of chance ?)  
 Here Hunt may box, or \*Mahomet may dance.

Hard is his lot, that here by fortune plac'd,  
 Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste ;  
 With every meteor of caprice must play,  
 And chace the new-blown bubbles of the day.  
 Ah ! let not censure term our fate our choice,  
 The stage but echoes back the publick voice ;  
 The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,  
 For we that live to please, must please to live.  
 Then prompt no more the follies you decry,  
 As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die ;  
 'Tis yours this night to bid the reign commence  
 Of rescu'd Nature, and reviving Sense ;  
 To chace the charms of sound, the pomp of show,  
 For useful mirth and salutary wo,  
 Bid scenick virtue form the list'ning age,  
 And truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

Order, decency, and decorum, were the main objects which our young manager kept constantly in his eye at the commencement of his administration. He was so accomplished himself in propriety of behaviour, as well as in the more valuable talents of his

\* A famous ropedancer and practiser of legerdemain tricks.

profession, that his example was greatly conducive to that regularity which he laboured to establish.

Punctuality in attendance at rehearsals was exacted and complied with, and as much due attendance paid to the business of the scene, as during the time of acting a play. Those players who had fallen into an unlucky habit of acting their parts imperfectly, and of being obliged to supply that defect by assuming a bold front, and forging matter of their own, Mr. Garrick steadily discouraged, till by being laid aside for some time, they had learnt to pay a proper respect to the audience and the author.

In distributing parts he consulted the genius of the actor; and though he was not without those prejudices from which no man can be entirely divested, yet, in general, the characters were very well suited to those who represented them. In confirmation of this, I need only mention one of the plays he revived; the *Every Man in his Humour*, of Ben Jonson, where all the personages were so exactly fitted to the look, voice, figure, and talents of the actor, that no play which comprehends so many distinct peculiarities of humour, was ever perhaps so completely acted; and to this care of the manager in restoring this obsolete play to the stage, may very justly be attributed its great success; for this comedy had often been brought upon the stage before, particularly in the time of Charles the Second, under the patronage of the witty earl of Dorset, and other noblemen of taste, but it had never till this time greatly pleased the people. Mr. Woodward had, at the end of the acting months in 1747, engaged to play one year at Dublin; but he was pre-

viously articulated to Mr. Garrick, before he left London, to act at the theatre in Drury-lane, when his Irish engagement should have been fulfilled.

Our new manager, in restoring nature to her genuine rights, could not accomplish his end more effectually than in reviving many of the long neglected scenes of Shakspeare.

In old Downs's list of plays, acted from the restoration to the middle of queen Anne's reign, it is astonishing to see how few plays written by the great father of the drama, were acted during so long a period. I am sorry that I have it in my power to prove, that during the twenty years government of the theatre by those eminent actors and managers, Booth, Wilkes, and Cibber, not more than eight or nine of Shakspeare's comedies and tragedies were in possession of the stage. Of the thirty-five uncontested pieces of this author, Mr. Garrick annually gave the publick seventeen or eighteen. But, when in the revival of Shakspeare's plays he complied with the general taste as well as his own, he was determined to restore him to his genuine splendour and native simplicity, unincumbered with the unnatural additions, and tinsel trappings, thrown upon him by some writers who lived in the reign of Charles the Second.

Downs, in his narrative of the revival of *Macheth*, by Davenant, assures us, that it was acted with all the magnificence of an opera. Locke's excellent musick had given the managers an opportunity of adding a variety of songs and dances, suitable, in some measure, to the play, but more agreeable to the then taste of the audience, who were pleased with the

comick dress which the actors gave to the witches, contrary, in the opinion of every person of taste, to the original design of the author; but Downs might have added too, that Davenant and his coadjutors adulterated many excellent scenes of this tragedy by ridiculous and foreign appendages, many of them in rhyme. The restorers, too, thought that Shakspeare had not given the audience a sufficient quantity of spectres; and therefore to supply the deficiency, lady Macbeth must be terrified with the ghost of Duncan, in a supplementary scene between her and her husband;—where she advises him to resign the crown.

## ACT IV.

*L. Macb.* You may in peace resign the ill got crown.

Why should you labour still to be unjust?

There has been too much blood already spilt;

Make not the subjects victims to your guilt.

*Macb.* Can you think that a crime which you did once

Provoke me to commit? Had not your breath

Blown my ambition up into a flame,

Duncan had yet been living.

*L. Macb.* ————— Resign your kingdom,

And with your crown put off your guilt.

*Macb.* Resign the crown, and with it both our lives!

I must have better counsellors.

*L. Macb.* What, your witches!

Curse on your messengers of hell! Their breath

Infected first my breath.—See me no more

As king; your crown sits heavy on your head,

But heavier on my heart: I have had too much

Of kings already—See! the ghost again!

[*Ghost appears.*

[*Lady Macbeth is led out by women.*]

*Macbeth solus.*

She does from Duncan's death to sickness grieve,  
 And shall from Malcolm's death her health receive ;  
 When by a viper bitten, nothing's good  
 To cure the venom, but a viper's blood.

The play thus altered, and different in almost every scene from the original, kept possession of the stage from 1665 to 1744, when Mr. Garrick first acted *Macbeth*. So little did the players know of Shakspeare's text, that Quin, after he had seen Garrick in this character, asked him where he got such strange and out of the way expressions, as

\* The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon ;  
 Where got'st thou that goose look ?

Mr. Garrick advised him to consult the original, and not borrow his knowledge of Shakspeare from the altered copies of his plays.†

*Romeo and Juliet* had lain neglected near 80 years, when the manager, struck with its beauties, resolved to enrich the publick with this pathetick tragedy. In Shakspeare, *Romeo*, after opening the tomb, and seeing, as he thought, the dead body of his beloved *Juliet*, drinks the poison, and dies before the lady recovers from her trance. *Otway's* play of *Caius Marius* is borrowed from *Romeo and Juliet*. The most affecting scenes are borrowed from Shakspeare, with very little alteration. The factions of *Marius* and *Sylla* are, by *Otway*, applied to the contests between

\* *Macbeth*. Act V.

† Mrs. Pritchard read no more of the play of *Macbeth* than her own part, as written out and delivered to her by the prompter.



the Whigs and Tories in the reign of Charles II. ( way made some alteration in the catastrophe, whi Mr. Garrick greatly improved, by the addition of scene, which was written with a spirit not unworl of Shakspeare himself.

The principal parts of this play were acted wi uncommon approbation by Barry, Mrs. Cibber, a Woodward.

## CHAPTER XII.

**Irene, a tragedy.....**Parts disposed of with propriety.....Its success....  
 Some account of the play.....Cavils of criticks.....Defence of it.....  
 Desertion of Barry and Mrs. Cibber to Rich, who unite with Quin  
 and Woffington.....Romeo and Juliet at Covent-garden and Drury-  
 lane.....Miss Bellamy.....Garrick and Woodward carry all before  
 them.....Queen Mab, &c. .

Soon after the acting of *Romeo and Juliet*, Johnson's *Irene* was put into rehearsal. Mr. Garrick seemed to embrace the interest of this tragedy with a cordiality which became the friendship which he professed to the author; in the giving out of the parts he was extremely accurate, to a degree of anxiety. The principal characters were divided between himself and Barry, Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Cibber; and the subordinate ones were given to Berry, Havard, Sowdon, and Burton. The dresses were rich and magnificent, and the scenes splendid and gay, such as were well adapted to the inside of a Turkish seraglio; the view of the gardens belonging to it was in the taste of eastern elegance.

Since the days of *Cato*, no tragedy had been acted, which was so justly admired for beauty of diction, energy of sentiment, harmony of versification, and purity of moral, as *Irene*. *Cato*, indeed, was the darling of the publick; lifted into notice by the reputation of the author, it was supported by the joint efforts of two contending parties, who strove

which should most contribute to its celebrity. More speeches from Cato were learned by rote, and constantly repeated, than from any play that had ever been acted.

But Cato is a character almost superiour to humanity ; he is, indeed, great and exalted, and deserving our admiration, but as much above our imitation as our pity. In the choice of characters, and economy of fable, Irene is more dramattick, and much more capable of exciting pity and terroure, the great ends of tragedy, than Cato. But Irene was not treated with the candour which its merit deserved. And though no play, I will venture to assert, would draw together a larger audience than this tragedy, not only from its intrinsick merit, but the great love and veneration which the publick bear to the author ; yet it has never been once revived since its first representation.

The strangling of Irene in the view of the audience, suggested by Mr. Garrick, was not approved by some criticks ; and this incident, after the first night, was removed to a greater distance. Notwithstanding the approbation of Irene was not so general as might have been expected, it was greatly admired by a number of judicious spectators, who supported it in a run of nine nights.

Aaron Hill, in a letter to Mr. Mallet, was very justly profuse of his praise to Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Cibber, in the parts of Demetrius and Aspasia. Mr. Barry's action in Mahomet he censured severely, but, I think, uncandidly. Hill was an exorbitant

panegyrist of Garrick, and seemed to allow little or no merit to Barry.

Mrs. Pritchard deserved the highest praise for sustaining a character not very well adapted to her form, and one too which had the disadvantage of maintaining the cause of ambition and apostacy against that of virtue and religion.

Many criticisms were written in the newspapers, and in several pamphlets, upon this tragedy. But however some might find fault with the management of the plot, and others pretend to see an inconsistency of character; yet all agreed that it abounded in fine sentiment and elegant language; nay, they allowed the catastrophe was striking, and the moral excellent; indeed, the author had in his view throughout the play, the cause of truth, of virtue and religion. Every scene is so compleatly finished, with respect to energy of thought, and harmony of numbers, that, perhaps, the connexion of scenes artificially disposed, to produce a pathetick and striking situation with tragical effect, was not so minutely attended to as it ought. A garden that has in it innumerable beds of fine flowers and sweet shrubbery, disposed in neat order and elegant trimming, does not affect the sight, or please the fancy, so much as one that is so constructed as to attract the eyes in one grand view, though it may not be so rich in all the productions of beautiful nature.

Notwithstanding Mr. Garrick's utmost attention to please his principal actors, and to keep them in constant good humour, he found that jealousy and rivalry, the growth of a playhouse, would frequently interrupt that tranquillity he wished to establish.

Barry complained that he was called upon to act at improper seasons, and on unlucky days; such as when a great lady had summoned a prodigious company to a concert of musick, or a route, or upon an opera night, or when some publick assembly was announced.

Mr. Garrick, to comply with this humour, desired him to choose his own days: "Very well," said the other, "this is all that I can ask." But even that compliance did not produce the desired effect. Garrick's Hamlet still drew larger crowds than Barry's; but this, indeed, was a misfortune which Garrick was not anxious to remove. Mrs. Cibber too, who naturally sympathized with the most affecting lover of the stage, had particular objections to the manager's conduct, respecting those plays in which she acted principal parts. These discontents of Barry and Mrs. Cibber broke out at first into murmurs, into pettish and peevish complaints, and at last ended in their revolt from Drury-lane to Covent-garden. In the summer of 1749, they became hired servants of Mr. Rich, who gave them what they principally wished for, the power of getting up what plays they pleased, and of choosing what parts they would condescend to act. Thus was ambition satisfied, for some time at least. Rich, at the same time, strengthened his company by the valuable addition of Mr. Quin and Mrs. Woffington.

Full of resentment for supposed injuries, and with a determined resolution to vanquish the little tyrant of Drury-lane, Mr. Barry and Mrs. Cibber

took the field at Covent-garden pretty early in October, 1749, with a play in which they were much and justly admired. Romeo and Juliet had raised their reputation for scenes of tender love and pathetick distress to a very high degree. The publick in general were greatly prepossessed in their favour; they imagined that those characters, after being represented by them, could not be tolerably filled by any other performers.

However, Mr. Garrick was not terrified with the threatenings of the grand confederacy of Covent-garden; for Quin and Woffington were to come forward as soon as Romeo and Juliet had done their best. He instructed Miss Bellamy, a young actress of merit, whose person was elegant, and whose voice, when well regulated, sufficiently harmonious, in the part of Juliet. Romeo he studied with great accuracy, and under the disadvantages of giving his original idea of the part to Mr. Barry. As he was always remarkably active and diligent in business, and secret in all his stage operations, he opposed the other house on the very first night of their acting Romeo and Juliet. He managed so well, that he divided the opinions of the publick upon the merits of the performers. Much idle criticism was thrown into the prints by the partisans of the rival actors. In the mean time the town was obliged to take up with one play at both theatres for twelve days successively. At last Mrs. Cibber's strength failing, another was given out. Mr. Garrick, if he did not absolutely conquer the enemy, kept the

field; for he closed the long contest with a diverting epilogue, which was spoken by Mrs. Clive.

Though the publick ran in crowds at first to decide upon the merits of the actors in this tragedy; yet many were justly angry at being obliged either to see one play repeatedly, or give up the diversions of a theatre for almost a fortnight.

It was observed, that the managers got no emolument by the contest; for they often played to thin audiences, or such as were made up by art. Those who came from the country, either on business or pleasure, and proposed only to stay a short time in town, had still more reason to complain. The following epigram, which alludes very happily to an incidental speech of Mercutio in the play, was printed during this struggle for theatrical pre-eminence.

*On the run of Romeo and Juliet.*

• Well, what's to-night, says angry Ned,  
As up from bed he rouses?  
Romeo again! and shakes his head;  
Ah! pox on both your houses!

Mr. Garrick foresaw that the great actors of Covent-garden would not long maintain their union; he rightly imagined that they would soon break out into feuds and dissensions. Quin was jealous of Barry, and too proud to give way to him. The latter had too much spirit to be brow-beaten by Quin. Cibber and Woffington had a cool contempt for each other, which was frequently communicated by looks, whispers, and half speeches; but Cibber's delicacy never

broke out into reproach, and the other had sense enough not to provoke her by any illiberality of language. Rich was but a bad decider of differences; by interposing, he was sure to make matters worse; like Milton's Chaos,

---

He umpire sat,  
And by decision more embroil'd the fray.

He heartily hated them all, and they very cordially despised him. In private conversation, amongst his dependents, he called Woffington his Sarah Malcolm, and Cibber his Katherine Hayes.\*

While the leading players of Covent-garden were wrangling amongst themselves, the manager of Drury-lane pursued his business unremittedly. He was always sure to fill his house when *he* acted; but to give himself some ease, and at the same time to attack Rich in his strongest hold, by the assistance of Woodward, he, with much care and expense, brought out a new pantomime, called Queen Mab. This was amongst the few farces of that kind which met with encouragement at Drury-lane. The people crowded for above forty nights to see this exhibition, which, it seems, had a kind of novelty to recommend it from the fable. This decided the victory in favour of Garrick; and a print, called the Steel-yards, was published, in which Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Woffington, with Quin and Barry, were put into one scale; and Woodward, in the character of Harlequin, and Queen Mab, in the other. The first scale kicked the beam.

\* Two infamous women hanged for murder.



Mr. Garrick now revived his dramatick satire of *Lethe*, or *Æsop* in the *Shades*, which had been acted twice at *Drury-lane* before he commenced manager, and several times afterwards at *Goodman's-fields*. He strengthened it with several additional characters; a *Poet*, a *Drunken Man*, a *Frenchman*, a *Fine Gentleman*, a *Methodist Tailor*, and a *Woman of Quality*. To ensure success to this petit piece, he took for his own share in acting, the *Poet*, the *Drunken man*, and the *Frenchman*; the *Fine Gentleman* he gave to *Woodward*, and the *Lady* to *Mrs. Clive*.

The *Poet*, notwithstanding the manager's acting it, did not please; with all his art he could not reconcile the audience to that character; after a few struggles in its favour, he gave it up.

The *drunken Man* and the *French Barber*, after he had diverted the town with them for a few nights, he gave to *Mr. Yates* and *Mr. Blakes*, who performed them with applause, but in a manner much inferiour to that of their master.

*Woodward* excelled in displaying the airy and impertinent sallies of a pretended fine gentleman; and *Mrs. Clive* entered so naturally into the vicious taste of a woman of quality, who runs mad after all the reigning irregularities and fopperies of the times; and gave such vivacity, humour, whim and variety, to her inimitable action, that the farce gained great advantage from her representation of *Lady Riot*.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Character of Aaron Hill.....His various occupations and projects....

His love of the stage.....His dramattick pieces and instructions in acting.....Intimacy with Booth.....His generosity to authors and actors.....Reduced to the necessity of acting his Merope for his own emolument.....Its success.....Lord Bolingbroke's letter to him,...  
His correspondence With Mr. Garrick.....His death.

Soon after the run of Irene, the Merope of Voltaire, translated and adapted to the English stage by Aaron Hill, was put into rehearsal. This gentleman was so extremely fond of theatrical representations, and so particularly enamoured of the art of acting, that he well deserves a place in a history of the stage. Mr. Hill in person was tall and genteel; in advanced life, his figure, air, and manner, were gracefully venerable; with a warm and benevolent mind, he had the delicate address and polite manners of the accomplished gentleman. When he was very young, from a noble spirit of indignation against the cavillers of merit, he wrote a poem called Camillus, in vindication of the famous earl of Peterborough. That nobleman was so pleased with it, that he sought for the author, and appointed him his secretary. His marriage soon after to a young lady, whom he tenderly loved, prevented his going abroad with lord Peterborough; this he alleged as an excuse in a letter to his lordship; but added another, which, I believe, also had its weight, that the duch-

ess of Shrewsbury had engaged him to superintend the operas. In 1709, he was master of Drury-lane theatre; and, at the desire of Mr. Booth, whose talents he admired, and whose friendship he cultivated through life, he wrote a tragedy, called *Elfrida*, an imperfect essay, which, about twenty years afterwards, he altered and new-modelled, and called *Athelwold*. His solicitude about the success of this play was great, and Wilks and Cibber were both entreated by him to act in it; which solicitation, however, they refused; and, I believe, the tragedy was so coldly received, that it was not played more than three nights. The concluding lines of *Athelwold* deserve to be remembered, for the excellency of the moral contained in them:

O Leolyn, be obstinately just;  
Indulge no passion, and betray no trust.  
Never let man be bold enough to say,  
Thus, and no farther, shall my passion stray;  
The first crime past, compels us on to more;  
And guilt proves *fate*, that was but *choice* before.

The *Elfrida* of Mason, written on the plan of the Greek tragedy, on the same subject as *Athelwold*, will deter all future writers from attempting a fable already so nobly executed. Mr. Hill followed *Elfrida* with the opera of *Rinaldo*, which occasionally introduced the musick of the great Handel to this nation. Mr. Hill was at this time conductor of two theatres, a task which he discharged to the satisfaction of the publick. But he soon quitted his employments of the stage, on account of some misunderstanding with the lord chamberlain; and though

invited to resume them by persons of the first rank, he would never listen to their most pressing intreaties.

Nothing could induce him to relinquish his beloved province of the stage, but a noble and spirited resolution to improve certain schemes which he had long formed in his mind for the publick good, with a full intention to bring them, if possible, to maturity. Soon after, he had an opportunity to gratify his passion for the service of the commonwealth; and, accordingly, he engaged in the schemes of making beach oil, of establishing plantations in a vast tract of land adjoining to South Carolina, and of clearing the woods in the north of Scotland, and applying the timber, produced by them, to the use of the navy. In all these several projects, though he failed in them through untoward accidents, and for want of sufficient sums of money to bring them to perfection, he shewed the extent of his genius, and the fertility of his invention; but I never heard that his own fortune ever received the least addition by them: his spirit, indeed, was active and enterprising; but he was more anxious for general good than private emolument.

One improvement he brought, indeed, to perfection; the making of potash equal to that which is brought from Russia, to which place an immense sum of money used to be sent from England.

But however anxious he was to promote the publick welfare, and increase the resources of national wealth, he soon resumed his darling passion for the

stage. It is said, and I believe with truth, that he made a present of the *Fatal Extravagance*, a very pathetick tragedy in two acts, to one Joseph Mitchell, a distressed Scotch poet. This was written with a benevolent view to reform the passion for gaming in 1720, the South-Sea year, which then raged more furiously, if possible, than it has done since. To relieve the distresses of Mr. Bond, he translated Voltaire's *Zara*; and not being able to get it acted at the regular theatres, he, with much assiduity, by the help of a set of raw unpractised players, whom he took infinite pains to instruct, made a shift to have it represented at the great room in York-buildings. His nephew acted *Osman*; Bond, who was then aged and infirm, played *Lusignan*, the old king of Jerusalem; and *Zara* was given to Miss Ferguson, a young actress. The reputation of the author brought some of the best company in London to this diminutive theatre. The play was acted several times; nor did the death of Mr. Bond (who expired almost upon the stage, and at the very time when the people were applauding him for his natural exhibition of an aged and dying monarch) prevent the run of the tragedy.

But *Zara* was, soon after, in 1736, brought on the stage of Drury-lane; and this play fortunately ushered to the publick one of the most pathetick actresses of this or any other country. Mrs. Cibber made her first essay in *Zara*. Mr. Hill had the honour and pleasure to instruct her. He interlined her part with a kind of commentary upon it; he marked every accent and emphasis; every look, action, and

deportment proper to the character, in all its different situations, he critically pointed out. The delight Mr. Hill felt for the very great and deserved applause of his pupil, in *Zara*, was damped by the unhappy failure of his nephew in *Osman*. The young gentleman's figure and voice were by no means disagreeable; but a certain stiffness in action, and too labour-ed and emphatical an emphasis in speaking, disgusted the critics, who too severely corrected a young performer, whom, on the first night of his acting, they cruelly exploded. A principal character was, therefore, forced to be read for several nights together; yet such charms had the unaffected performance of Mrs. Cibber's *Zara*, that the people ran in crowds to the theatre fourteen nights successively. Mr. Milward, in the part of *Lusignan*, in voice, action, and manner, gave admired force to the pathetic scene of his interview with *Nerestan* and *Zara*.

Much about this time Mr. Hill wrote the *Prompter*, a periodical paper, in which he attacked some of the principal actors of the stage, and particularly Colley Cibber and Mr. Quin. Cibber laughed, but Quin was angry; and meeting Mr. Hill in the Court of Requests, a scuffle ensued between them, which ended in the exchange of a few blows.

In every revolution of the stage our poet was extremely attentive to the interest of the proprietors. When the greatest part of Highmore's actors revolted from him, he offered his service to the manager in writing plays; and to the actors who remained with him, he generously gave his lessons. He wrote a letter, much about that time, to a beautiful young

actress, upon her playing the part of Selima, in *Tamierlane*, in which, with the most insinuating address, and a delicacy of sentiment almost peculiar to himself, he conveys admirable lessons of speaking and action.

“ Though your action, when pleading with Bajazet for life, was beautifully *just*, it was not *strong* enough, nor so *wild* and *distracted* as it ought to have been ; let me beg you to remember it to-night ; and throw yourself, with an unreserved boldness and freedom, into the liveliest attitudes of *distress* ; fully assured, that a form so finished as yours can have nothing to fear from a spirited excess of action ; since the more *light* it is shewn in, the more *charms* it discovers.” And again, “ I had lately the pleasure of hearing you say, that you did not know the strength of your own voice, having never raised it high enough to find it in danger of breaking.—You cannot imagine what an obligation I shall think it, if you will prevail on yourself to make this trial to-night ; only with this caution, whenever you raise it, to let it rise *naturally* ; that is, without needless endeavours to make it *sweeter* than it is, but as much *stronger* and fuller, as much more distinct, pathetick, and weighty, as possible. I wish I knew how to explain what I mean by *weighty* and *pathetick* ; by weight, I mean a forceful and important dwelling upon the word in the delivery, as if you would stamp it upon the understanding ; as if you parted with it reluctantly, till convinced it would have its effect.

“ Then, to prevent such a dwelling on the utterance from appearing affected, or too whining, comes in the *pathetick*, which is nothing more than that

feeling significance, that interested sound of concern that gives meaning to the tone it is spoken with."

Mr. Hill's sentiments upon acting seem to me so just and important, that I shall hope for thanks rather than pardon for quoting the following rules which he gave in a letter to the actor of Tamerlane.

"If my conceptions are any ways right, the air and deportment of Tamerlane should, every where, and to all persons, be distinguished by a conscious superiority. He should smile without gayety, look erect without pride, be provoked without rage, appear soft without tenderness, and condescend without ceremony.

"As to the manner of speaking, as it is the result of his reflections, it ought to be strong, deliberative, and impressive; for his sentiments are so manly, so noble, that they require a distinct and weighty utterance; not only as they deserve it by their importance, but because their effect would be lost, if time is not allowed them to descend from the ear to the understanding."

Thus this liberal minded man generously bestowed his labour and admonitions on the players with an address and skill which deserved their sincere regard and strictest attention; but it is to be feared his advice was received by them with coldness, and his instructions treated with neglect. I find him frequently complaining, in his letters to several of his correspondents, of the vanity, ignorance, and self-sufficiency, of the players. His translation of Voltaire's *Alzira*, acted at Lincoln's-inn-fields, in 1736,



he gave to Mr. Giffard, the manager of the company. The original, it was said, was acted twice in one evening; but as no history of the French stage takes the least notice of the transaction, we must suppose this to be a fable. Mr. Hill, in adapting French plays to the English stage, forgot the distinguishing character of the two nations. The Frenchman, when he goes to a play, seems to make his entertainment a matter of importance. The long speeches in the plays of Corneille, Racine, Crebillon, and Voltaire, which would disgust an English ear, are extremely pleasing to our light neighbours: they sit in silence, and enjoy the beauty of sentiment, and energy of language; and are taught habitually to cry at scenes of distress. The Englishman looks upon the theatre as a place of amusement; he does not expect to be alarmed with terrour, or wrought upon by scenes of commiseration; but he is surprised into the feelings of these passions, and sheds tears because he cannot avoid it. The theatre, to most Englishmen, becomes a place of instruction by chance.

Hill, in translating *Zara* and *Alzira*, forgot the genius of the two people; he should have interrupted, by an easy interposition, those long speeches which are equally tiresome to the speaker and the hearer.

Mr. Hill's repeated attempts to reform the action of the players, not having answered his intention, about the year 1735, he indulged his fancy, which, indeed, was warm and enthusiastick, with a new scheme; which was to form a race of actors who

should by far exceed all that went before them. To this end he proposed the founding of a tragick academy. In a letter to Mr. Thomson, author of the Seasons, he explains himself so fully, as well as so romantically, that I think I ought not to deprive the reader of this extraordinary project.

“ All our stages being prostitutes to the avarice of their bawds for wit, who pollute and give her up to the desires of the wanton, no experiment can be made in them, to see what effect might arise from *a better choice of plays*, and a juster *art* of acting; yet, unless I deceive myself, after long and impartial reflection, things may be greatly mended in a new undertaking; nay, I am so strongly convinced of it, that I could even hazard the expense of a trial, without any subscription or other support than the countenance of a dozen or two of untaxed encouragers, properly chosen, great names, in some declaration to the following purpose :

“ Whereas certain gentlemen have proposed, at their own expense, to attempt an improvement, under the name of a *Tragick Academy*, for extending and regulating theatrical diversions, and for instructing and educating actors in the practice of *dramatick* passion, and a power to *express* them strongly, the success of which laudable purpose might establish the *reputation of the stage*, by appropriating its influence to the service of wisdom and virtue; *our names* are therefore subscribed, in declaration that we will protect, and give countenance to, this useful undertaking, so long as the same shall be carried on with a skill and intention correspondent to the proposal.”

He then wishes to know Thomson's opinion of Frederick prince of Wales ; and whether it would not be practicable to engage his royal highness to countenance a work of that nature. Fired with the hopes of obtaining such illustrious patronage, he tells his friend, that he *would see* before Christmas, that is, in three months, a *new company* established, whose *beginnings* would make credible whatever *improvements* he wished for.

The project of a new tragick academy died in its birth; the prince of Wales refused to lend the influence of his name to it, and the projector made no farther progress in it.

Mr. Hill, who was composed of those amiable qualities of the mind which delight in acts of benevolence, though not himself in affluent circumstances, was always ready to give his assistance to those who wanted or claimed it. His tragedy of Merope, which he had translated from Voltaire, and at first had given to it the title of *Ægisthus*, he offered to Theophilus Cibber, in his distress, to be acted for his benefit. Many unlucky circumstances prevented that actor from receiving any benefit from this generous offer; and Mr. Hill, the humane and benevolent Mr. Hill, who had never heard of a distress which he did not wish to relieve, was at last reduced to the necessity, from a variety of accidents, to have recourse to the stage for some relief, by acting his Merope; Mr. Garrick received it with a generous feeling that did honour to his humanity.

The author was extremely anxious to have his play cast with the full strength of the company; but

the principal actors are not easily led to play such parts as they imagine are unsuitable to their powers. Mr. Garrick, indeed, was born to act Eumenes ; but though Mrs. Cibber had given a sort of promise that she would perform Merope, yet after a long hesitation she gave it up : whether she imagined the part did not suit her slim maidenly figure, or from what other reason, I know not ; but she positively refused to act it. The author pressed Poliphontes upon Barry, which he disliking, with much imprudence Hill weakly expected he would act Narbas, a very inferiour character. Mrs. Pritchard accepted Merope, Mr. Havard engaged for Poliphontes, and Berry was well pleased with Narbas.

The play is certainly the masterpiece of Hill, though in many places he retains a swell of expression, and an affectation of strength, which destroys all ease and grace ; yet he is more natural and simple in his language, upon the whole, in this play, than in any of his dramatick compositions. The second act is finely written. The scene between Merope and Eumenes is a beautiful exertion of genius, in describing the workings of natural affection in a son and mother unknown to each other.

The profits arising from the acting of the play amounted to no more, in three benefit nights, than 148*l*. And, I suppose, this sum, with 100*l*. from Mr. Millar, the bookseller, (the then stated price of a play) was all the money he ever acquired from the stage : and this, indeed, was a poor relief

to the necessities of a man who always lived like a person of rank, and had a family of children.\*

The Death of Cæsar, by Voltaire, he had, for some years, adapted, as near as he thought it would bear, to the English stage. It must be remembered Voltaire had no women in his tragedy; but Hill introduced the wife of Cæsar, and Portia, the wife of Brutus. This was a subject for which he discovered an uncommon predelection. Cæsar is not only drawn in a favourable light, but is made the warm friend of his country, and is murdered by those whom he had protected and conferred the highest honours upon, at the very time when he is meditating the only means that could then make Rome happy. That the conspirators, by the assassination of Cæsar, could do no service to their country, I believe no man who considers the subject candidly will deny; and it seems strange that Cicero, who loudly exclaims against the pollution of religion, by admitting Cæsar, a mortal, to the participation of divine honours, which were decreed him by an almost unanimous vote of the senate, could possibly imagine, that a people so venal and corrupt could be capable of enjoying liberty. This play Mr. Hill sent to all his particular friends, and amongst the rest, to Mr. Pope and lord Bolingbroke. The former, he tells us, approved of it in the highest terms, at the same time that he pointed out some faults for his correction. The

\* One foible he had, which was ostentation; he was very fond of seeing company, and giving magnificent dinners.

letter of lord Bolingbroke is a very singular one ; and as it is not to be found in his works, and is written with great politeness, and an air of frankness and sincerity, the reader will not be displeased to see it here.

LETTER from Lord BOLINGBROKE to AARON HILL, Esq.

“ Twickenham, July 31, 1738.

“ Sir,

“ I HAVE read, since I came hither, with Mr. Pope, the Inquiry into the Merit of Assassination, the tragedy of Cæsar, and the dedication, by which you intend much honour to my name. If the treatise has not entirely convinced me that Cæsar was a patriot, it has convinced me, at least, in spite of all ancient and modern prejudices, he was so as much as Pompey ; and that liberty would have been as safe in his hands as the other's.

“ The tragedy is finely wrote ; the characters admirably well drawn ; the sentiments are noble, beyond the power of words ; and the expression, dignified as it is, can add nothing to the sublime.

“ We have doubted (Mr. Pope and I) whether, in some few instances, the utmost effort of language has not obscured the beauty and force of thought. If it became me to say any thing more of the dedication than this, that by inscribing to me one of the noblest dramas\* that our language, or any other, can

\* This tragedy of Cæsar, afterwards called by the author the Roman Revenge, was printed in 1753, in Hill's dramattick works.

boast, you transmit my character to posterity with greater advantage than any I could have given it; I would say, that I feel a laudable vanity to be thought the friend, as well as admirer, of so great a writer; and, therefore should be still better pleased, if you treat me in a style less elevated, and less distant from that familiarity which I shall always be extremely glad to hold with you.

“ I am, SIR,

Most sincerely,

Your most obedient, and

Most humble Servant,

H. S. L. BOLINGBROKE.”

I cannot admit of a doubt, that this letter was shewn to the managers of both playhouses, though without producing the effect which Mr. Hill might possibly expect. This play, on which his heart was so set, had been offered and received, promised to be acted and rejected, several times during the space of ten years. Quin refused to act the part of Cæsar; whether from a dislike to it, or from a remembrance of the author's attack upon him in the Prompter, I know not.

Soon after the run of *Merope*, Mr. Hill tried all his art to make Mr. Garrick in love with his great idol Cæsar.\* To this purpose, knowing that he admired the energy of passion more than dignity of character, or weight of sentiment, he took great pains to convince him of his error, assuring him, that sentiment was the soul of tragedy.

\* Mr. Hill's son was christened Julius; and his three daughters, Caliope, Astrea, and Minerva.

"There is," says he, "but one walk in acting which you have left untrodden; the walk I mean is the sublimely solemn one, the walk of weight and dignity; but not the cold declamatory and somniferous. Our unimpassioned Catos, and half-passioned Tamerlanes, were left too little animated by their authors, but were never written with so frostily congealed a chillness as their actors have been pleased to lend them."

He then acquaints him, that Booth, at his first appearance in Cato, always raised from forty-eight to fifty thundering claps, on sentiments which he made the audience feel. Then glancing towards Quin, his successor in that character, he says, that they dwindled with him to half a dozen. He then goes on to tell him, that he could point out the causes why this character of Cato had now lost its influence; and which a mouth he could name, together with *such eyes* and *attitudes*, has more than *seventy* places where strong claps would rise infallibly.

How are the best minds, sometimes by an eager desire to gain a point, or the approbation of a favourite system, betrayed, not only into the forgetfulness of truth and candour, but the meanest and most ridiculous flattery? Cato was never acted by Quin without great and well-merited applause: and what is still better, never without that best approbation, the strict attention of the audience. To rate the merit of an actor by the number of plaudits he obtains, is unworthy of the man who makes such an estimate, and of him to whom it is proposed. But



supposing what this gentleman says were true, how must the feelings of both actor and audience be disturbed by such a prodigal profusion of applause? But all this, and much more, Mr. Hill would have said, to prevail on Garrick to undertake the part of Cæsar; but notwithstanding this, his efforts were vain. Mr. Garrick knew that neither his person nor his voice were adapted to such characters as Cato or Cæsar. Admirably suited as the flexibility of his powers was to all the various passions of the human heart, and to all the rapid transitions of them, he wanted that fulness of sound, that *os rotundum*, to roll with ease a long declamatory speech, or give force and dignity to mere sentiment.

Amidst a variety of Mr. Hill's letters to Mr. Garrick, which he wrote some time before his death, I meet with no farther mention of Cæsar; and suppose, from that circumstance, that Mr. Garrick had absolutely discouraged any farther application upon the subject. For several months before he died, he had been seized with frequent and violent pains, which it was thought proceeded from an inflammation in his kidneys. He died the fifth of February, 1750, in the very minute of the earthquake, the shock of which, though speechless, he appeared to feel. The humane and generous Frederick, prince of Wales, had commanded Merope, for the benefit of the author, the day before his death.

Aaron Hill had certainly great claim to our regard, both as a man and an author. The business of his life consisted in performing, or wishing to perform, acts of benevolence; his supreme pleasure to relieve

the wants of others, unmindful of his own. As an author, his merit is unquestionable; allowing for some peculiarities in his style, we must confess that he had an uncommon power of thinking, and a nervous manner of expressing his sentiments. This, indeed, he laboured too much, and sometimes till he removed that grace of simplicity, which is the principal ornament of fine writing. His frequent use of compound epithets, with adverbs joined to participles or adjectives, rendered his style subject to the censure of obscurity and bombast.

But, in all his writings, there is found good sense, and sometimes a pleasing vein of poetry; his worst fault was an affectation of expressing himself too pointedly and forcibly, and this we find gently hinted in the letter written to him by lord Bolingbroke. His friendship with Mr. Pope was interrupted by some lines in the *Dunciad*, which he resented in a poem called the *Caveat*, or progress of Wit; in the beginning of which Pope is thus described:

Tuneful Alexis, on the Thames' fair side,  
The ladies' play-thing, and the muses' pride;  
With merit popular, with wit polite;  
Easy, though vain; and elegant though light;  
Desiring and 'deserving others' praise,  
Poorly accepts a fame he ne'er repays:  
Unborn to cherish, sneakingly approves,  
And wants the soul to spread the worth he loves.

This was fixing Pope's accusation of Addison's envy upon himself.\* I have, with some pleasure,

\* In the letters between Hill and Pope, we plainly perceive the latter afraid of the former. Hill boldly accuses; Pope meanly denies, and skulks under pitiful subterfuge.

though not with equal knowledge, dwelt on the life and writings of a man who took such delight in the entertainments of the stage ; and was not only a considerable dramatick writer, but almost the only gentleman who laboured assiduously to understand the art of acting, and took incessant pains to communicate his knowledge of it to others. He left a fragment called an Essay on the Art of Acting, which, it is much to be lamented, that he did not live to complete. What remains is worth an actor's consideration.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Managers complained of for not rearing theatrical plants.....Mr. Garrick engages Mr. Dexter.....Ross.....Mossop.....Their various abilities displayed.

**M**ANAGING actors have often been upbraided with the neglect of encouraging young theatrical merit, and for not raising up geniuses for the stage. They have been frequently told, that they never reared any promising plants which might in time grow to perfection. Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, had no equal successors; and we are told by Aaron Hill, and other criticks, that this was owing to their envy or their indolence. This argument would have some force, if actors of genius were as easily raised as beds of tulips. But the genuine representer of nature on the stage is as rarely to be found, as the fine painter of manners in a dramatick story.

Mr. Garrick, however, about two years after Barry had left him, gave encouragement to three young actors from Ireland, to Dexter, Mossop, and Ross.

Dexter was advised to try his abilities for acting in the part of Oroonoko. This gentleman was so far master of himself, that he continued in conversation with his friends in the pit, on the first night of his performing, till the second musick, which is generally played about half an hour before the curtain is drawn up, put him in mind that it was time to think

of the stage-apparatus. The applause which Mr. Dexter gained was beyond expectation. Mr. Garrick was so charmed with the prospect of his success, that he wrote to a friend who was at some distance from the capital, in the strongest terms, of his young actor's favourable reception; and declared that he had wonderful expectations from the first proof he had given of his abilities. Dexter continued to act Oroonoko several times successively with applause; but it was observed, that every time he acted, he abated in power to please the audience. The publick had been surprised into an approbation, which the actor wanted abilities to confirm. His person was tall, and not ungraceful; but his voice was weak and thin, and unable to bear exertion in scenes of animation. He was, in two seasons, fairly worn out for a London stage; but he afterwards was favourably entertained by the Dublin audience. He died a few years since, and was much esteemed for his regular conduct and genteel behaviour.

Mr. Ross was happily directed by Mr. Garrick to the choice of Bevil in the *Conscious Lovers*, for his first part. His person was pleasing, and his address easy; his manner of speaking natural; his action well adapted to the gravity, as well as grace, of the character. He was approved by a polite and distinguishing audience, who seemed to congratulate themselves on seeing an actor, whom they imagined capable of restoring to the stage the long lost character of the real fine gentleman.

Mr. Ross is living; and it will look uncandid and invidious to take notice of his defects, which are evidently owing to his great love of ease, and his fondness for social pleasure; he has often given proofs that he was master of abilities to rouse and animate an audience in the most passionate scenes of our best tragedies.

Mr. Mossop chose to give a specimen of his abilities in Richard the Third; and in this he was wise; for in Richard the awkwardness of his manner, and the untowardness of his deportment, were well disguised. Mossop was rather a powerful speaker than a pleasing actor; he had a strong and harmonious voice, which could rise from the lowest note to the highest pitch of sound: it was, indeed, a voice the most comprehensive I ever heard. He excelled most in parts of turbulence and rage, of regal tyranny and sententious gravity.

Zanga, in Dr. Young's *Revenge*, was his masterpiece; his wild burst of perfidy acknowledged and justified, in the fifth act of the play, struck every auditor with a degree of astonishment. With all his defects, Mossop was, after Garrick and Barry, the most applauded and valuable actor on the stage.

In July, 1749, Mr. Garrick was married to Mademoiselle Violetti, a young lady, who to great elegance of form, and many polite accomplishments, joined the more amiable virtues of the mind.

But Mr. Garrick, as if he apprehended that this action of his life, which was so much approved by his most intimate friends, and the publick in gene-

ral, would expose him to the shafts of ridicule, was resolved to anticipate all sarcastical wit, by being merry with himself; to this end, his friend, Mr. Edward More, was invited to write a diverting poem on his marriage, in which Mr. Garrick's character is reviewed by some gossiping ladies, and he is termed by one of them

A very Sir John Brute all day,  
And Fribble all the night.

Indeed, the guarding against distant ridicule, and warding off apprehended censure, was a favourite peculiarity with Mr. Garrick through life. Lord North could not be more pleased with anticipating the elegant and elaborate harangues of a Burke, or the thundering eloquence of our modern Demosthenes, Charles Fox, than Roscius was with breaking the strength of an animadversion, either on his acting, or any part of his conduct.

I remember when he first acted *Macbeth*, he was so alarmed with the fears of critical examination, that during his preparation for the character, he devoted some part of his time to the writing a humorous pamphlet upon the subject. He knew that his manner of representing *Macbeth* would be essentially different from that of all the actors who had played it for twenty or thirty years before; and he was therefore determined to attack himself ironically, to blunt, if not to prevent the remarks of others. This pamphlet was called, *An Essay on Acting; in which will be considered the mimical behaviour of a certain fashionable faulty actor, and*

*laudableness of such unmanly, as well as inhuman, proceedings ; to which will be added, A short criticism on his acting Macbeth.*—It had this motto in the title-page,

Macbeth has murder'd Garrick.

This little pamphlet is written with humour and fancy. One of the parts which he acted after his marriage, and for the first time, was Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*. Some particular situations of this character occasioned much laughter and pleasantry, by applications of the audience to Mr. Garrick's change of condition.

The excellent action of Mrs. Pritchard in *Beatrice*, was not inferiour to that of Benedick. Every scene between them was a continual struggle for superiority ; nor could the audience determine which was the victor.



## CHAPTER XV.

New tragedies acted in 1753, 1754....The Gamester....The Brothers  
....Creusa, and Boadicea....Anecdotes relating to them, and re-  
marks on their success.

IT has been a constant complaint of the publick against managers, that they were always very sparing of their entertainment;\* that they seldom brought on the stage new plays or farces; that acting managers, especially, took more pleasure in exhibiting characters in which they would acquire credit to themselves, than in doing justice to authors of merit; that if the manager should happen to be an author, he would be tempted to push forward his own pieces to the neglect of others. How far Mr. Garrick might deserve any censure of this kind, I shall not now examine; but he certainly, in 1753 and 1754, contributed much to the publick amusement, by bringing on the stage the four new tragedies of the Gamester, the Brothers, Creusa, and Boadicea; besides reviving old plays, among which was Dryden's *Don Sebastian*, and Shakspeare's *Coriolanus*.

The Gamester of Mr. Edward More was an honest attack upon one of the most alluring and most pernicious vices to which mankind in general, and this nation in particular, is unhappily

\* Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Harris, the present theatrical managers, give the town more novelty than any of their predecessors.

subject. To shew how property is transferred from the undesigning votary of chance, to the vile betrayer of confidence, and the insidious dark-minded sharper, was an undertaking worthy of the best writer. The play was shewn in MS. to Dr. Young, who approved it greatly, with this remarkable expression, "that gaming wanted such a caustick as the concluding scene of the play presented."

The author has in his preface justified his tragedy against the censure of some criticks who complained of its low style, and who observed too that the catastrophe was too shocking. He has likewise acknowledged the assistance of Mr. Garrick, by telling us, that he was indebted to him for many popular passages in the play which were greatly applauded. I believe the scene between Leeson and Stukely, in the fourth act, was almost entirely his; for he expressed, during the time of action, uncommon pleasure at the applause given to it.

Notwithstanding that the Gamester was generally approved, and the acting of it much applauded, (Mr. Garrick distinguishing himself by uncommon spirit in some scenes, and by great agonizing feelings in the last) the play after having been acted ten or eleven nights, was suddenly stopt. It was generally said, that the physick administered by the Gamester was not only too strong for the publick in general, but offensive to the squeamish palates of some gaming societies; and that its progress was prevented by the interposition of people who ought not to have had any weight in a matter of that kind. I rather think this was a mere circulated report, to give more

consequence to some assemblies than they ever could really boast.

The Brothers, a tragedy of Dr. Young, was written about the year 1726, and rehearsed at Drury-lane soon after. The principal parts were given to Wilks, Booth, and Mills, and, I believe, to Mrs. Porter. But the author going into holy orders, it occasioned the sudden withdrawing of his tragedy : great expectations had been formed of it, and it was with some reluctance the managers gave it up.

Near thirty years after, Dr. Young consented to have the Brothers acted at the same theatre. He had formed a design of giving a thousand pounds to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; and hoped that the profits arising from the acting of the play would enable him to prosecute his scheme. Whatever success the play met with in the acting, the money raised by it was not adequate to the sum which was intended to be given away ; nevertheless the author made up the deficiency, and accomplished his pious intention.

We may reasonably imagine, that the tragedy, during so long a period that it was in the author's hands, received great and constant improvements from his revisal of it.

I cannot think him equally fortunate in all his scenes or characters. Philip and his two sons are drawn agreeably to their historical delineation. The third act, in which the Brothers plead their cause before Philip, is written in a masterly style ; but Erixene, the lady, is a most unamiable and inconsistent character, and one to whom the spectator can afford

very little pity. The last scene between Demetrius and Erixene is a laboured, but, I think, a very faint imitation of the admirable dying interview of Oroonoko and Imoinda.

The great fault of this writer was his custom of seeking for pearls and diamonds, when less costly materials would have served his purpose much better. Shakspeare is not more fond of a quibble than Young is of a bright thought. Long descriptions of misery, with all its attributes, in scenes of the greatest anxiety and distress, is a forgetfulness of situation, to seek after prettiness and brilliancy of expression. From that charming magazine of beauty, from which love borrows his keenest shafts, the bright lustre of a lady's eyes, Dr. Young draws some of his most luminous thoughts, which the lover plays upon in the hour of dark suspicion and heart-felt anguish.

Alonzo, in the *Revenge*, act iv., is worked up by Zanga to such a pitch of jealousy, that he is resolved to stab his wife; but his arm is arrested by the resistless power of the lady's eyes. Excusing his tardy vengeance to Zanga, he tells him,

————— I quarrell'd with my heart,  
And push'd it on, and bid it give her death;  
*But O! her eyes struck first, and murder'd me.*

In the fifth act of the same play, Alonzo goes to a bower, and finds Leonora sleeping: after a long meditation on her charms, which is but a faint imitation of Othello's soliloquy on his surveying the beauties of Desdemona, (for this admirer of original

composition is sometimes no more than an humble copier) Alonzo, the revengeful husband, on the lady's waking and looking at him, cries out, in transport,

↓ Ye powers ! with what an eye she mends the day !

Farther, in the same scene, Alonzo still pursues the brilliant image with unrelenting fury :

But oh those eyes ! those murderers ! O whence,  
Whence did'st thou steal those burning orbs ! from Heav'n ?  
Thou did'st, and 'tis religion to adore them !

In the *Brothers* this image of ocular beauty is still carried to a greater wantonness of expression, to little less than a quibble. Philip had killed the two sons of the Thracian king ; but the sister, preserved by the conqueror's remorse and pity, revenges the wounds of her murdered brothers by the lustre of her eyes.

*Brothers. Act I.*

She grew, she bloom'd, and now her eyes repay  
Her brother's wounds on Philip's rival sons.

Two parts in this play were acted admirably ; the noble warmth of Demetrius was congenial to the native fire and energy of Mr. Garrick ; and Mossop happily seized the cruel and insidious disposition of Perseus, and made him a proud, unrelenting, royal villain. Berry, though a very good general actor, in tragedy and comedy, wanted dignity of behaviour, and elevation of mind, to represent Philip.

This actor's great fault was too violent an attempt to pathetick feeling; his tears were shed abundantly indeed, but often loudly and ungracefully. Miss Bellamy had not art to represent the pride and passion of Erixene.

The tragedy of Boadicea was brought forward in November 1754; great expectations were formed of its success from the reputation of the author, who had acquired very great and deserved praise from his heroick poem of Leonidas. But his poetical fame, though great, is inferior to his character as a patriot and true lover of his country.

The amiable author read his Boadicea to the actors. But surely his manner of conveying the meaning of his poem was very unhappy; his voice was harsh, and his elocution disagreeable. Mr. Garrick was vexed to see him mangle his own work, and politely offered to relieve him by reading an act or two; but the author imagining that he was the only person fit to unfold his intention to the players, persisted to read the play to the end, to the great mortification of the actors, who would have been better pleased with the fine melody of their master, who excelled all men in giving proportional weight to the various characters of a dramatick piece.

The language of Boadicea is pure and classical, the sentiments just, and sometimes elevated; but the fable is not greatly interesting, nor are the characters very strongly marked. The Dumnorix of Glover is inferiour to the character of Caratach in Fletcher's Bonduca. Boadicea is detestable from

her cruelty and ingratitude : Œnobarbus is a faint, cold image of his namesake in Shakspeare's Antony and Cleopatra: Venusia is innocent and sentimental; but many such characters are to be found in our English tragedies.

From the spirited quarrel in the first act, between Boadicea and Dumnorix, the audience entertained hopes of seeing a perfect tragedy; but they were too soon acquainted with the catastrophe from every little inartificial incident. Mr. Garrick, whose spirit was invincible, endeavoured, in vain, to support the languid action of the tragedy. It was dragged on to the tenth night, and has never since been revived. Mr. Glover has preserved a custom of the Druids, who enjoined the persons who drank their poison to turn their faces towards the wind, in order to facilitate the operation of the potion.

*Dumnorix to Venusia. Act V.*

Now stand a while before the fanning breeze;  
So with its subtle energy, the potion  
Less rudely stealing on the powers of life,  
Will best perform its office, to remove  
Pale fear and grief for ever from the breast.

But Mr. Glover's masterpiece in tragedy is his Medea. Notwithstanding it is a subject rather of admiration than pity, yet the author has contrived from scenes of horror to draw tears of compassion; at least Mrs. Yates, by her admirable action, has melted every audience that has seen her inimitable Medea.

The story of Creusa is taken from the *Ion* of Euripides, a fable which is lost in mythology; but the poet intended to do honour to his country by the choice of it. Creusa, daughter to the king of Athens, is vitiated by Apollo, whose offspring, Ion, is dedicated to him by the priestess of Delphos. The mother is married to Xuthus, a prince who assisted the Athenians in their wars against the Eubæans; for his reward he is chosen their king, whose successor is young Ion.

Such a plot seems but ill adapted to the taste of a modern audience; but the skill of the poet contrived to draw from it a pleasing picture of a young prince's education, and to give excellent lessons of politicks and morals; and herein consists the chief merit of Creusa. In vain did the author strive to force a tear for Creusa's misfortunes. Mrs. Pritchard fainted, and Mr. Garrick discovered himself to be her husband, without any effect. However, the latter displayed a skill in delivering didacticks, which proved him to be a perfect master of elocution. The language of Creusa is not vigorous; but it is simple and elegant. Creusa's contempt of Xuthus is as unwarrantable as disgusting; and her minister Phorbas is little better than a politician run mad.



## CHAPTER XVI.

The Chinese Festival.....Preparations for it....Commanded by the king....Account of the disturbance occasioned by it.

THE success of Drury-lane theatre, under the direction of two managers who knew their interest, was great and uninterrupted; but Mr. Garrick foresaw that the repetition of his best characters would in time beget satiety; for while he was able to act, the people would expect to see him; he wished, therefore, to contrive some particular mode of management which would attract their attention without him. Mossop, Woodward, and others among his best comedians, were employed occasionally in some revived plays with advantage, and the usual Christmas dish of a new pantomime had the temporary effect of drawing the high and low vulgar after it; but all arts were supposed ineffectual to fix the wavering taste of the publick, unless Mr. Garrick made a part of the entertainment. However, he sought to divert and win them, by fixing their attention upon a new object.

In the summer of 1754, Mr. Garrick invited the celebrated Mr. Noverre to enter into an engagement with him for the ensuing winter, and to compose such dances as would surprise and captivate all ranks of people.

Noverre's compositions, in all the varieties of graceful movement, had long been admired and ap-

plauded by the connoisseurs, in all the courts of Europe; and to convince the world he understood dancing scientifically, he published a very learned and philosophical treatise upon that subject. In October, 1754, he composed that accumulation of multifarious figures, called the Chinese Festival; a spectacle, in which the dresses and customs of the Chinese were exhibited in almost innumerable shapes and characters. That nothing might be wanting to render this entertainment as perfect as possible, the most skilful dancers in Europe were hired at a considerable price.

But between the planning of this publick diversion, and the representation of it, hostilities commenced between England and France; and, as if we had at the same time declared war against ingenuity and the polite arts, the uninformed part of the people, stimulated by others, whose envy of superiour merit and good fortune is ever disguised with the specious shew of publick spirit, denounced vengeance against the managers, and particularly Mr. Garrick, for employing such a large number of Frenchmen in an English theatre, at a time of open war with their countrymen. Nothing could justify this unexpected attack but an exclusion of the English in preference of foreigners; but that was not the case, for all England and Ireland were ransacked to fill up the various figures projected by the composer of the Chinese Festival.

The prejudices of the people were so violent, and so openly divulged against this entertainment, that the king was prevailed upon to give a kind of sanc-

tion to it by a royal command, on the first night of representation; but the presence of a crowned head was not sufficient to curb that ill placed zeal against Papists and Frenchmen, which had seized many well meaning people. The good old king, when he was told the cause of the uproar, seemed to enjoy the folly of the hour, and laughed very heartily.

Had this entertainment been a spectacle of moderate expense to the managers, Mr. Garrick's judgment would have prompted him to give up a contest which was so very hazardous; but as very large sums had been expended on this novelty, he was in hopes that the audience would relent, and permit him to reimburse himself at least. But all endeavours to bring the enemies of France to temper were in vain; the struggle lasted five days, during which time our Roscius acted several of his most taking characters, with a view to soften the resentment of the publick; but he always met with very significant marks of their displeasure.

The inhabitants of the boxes, from the beginning of the dispute, were inclined to favour the exhibition of the Festival, and very warmly espoused the cause of the managers against the plebeian part of the audience, whom they affected to look down upon with contempt. The pit and galleries became more incensed by this opposition of the people of fashion, and entered into a strong alliance to stand by each other, and to annoy the common enemy. Several gentlemen of rank being determined to conquer the obstinacy of the rioters, they jumped from the boxes into the pit with a view to seize the ringleaders of

the fray. The ladies at first were so far from being frightened at this resolution of the gentlemen, that they pointed out the obnoxious persons with great calmness. Swords were mutually drawn, and blood shed. The females at last gave way to their natural timidity, they screamed out loudly, and a mighty uproar ensued. The contest between the boxes and the other parts of the house was attended with real distress to the managers, for they knew not now which party they could oblige with safety. One would not give way to the other, and they seemed to be pretty equally balanced: at last, after much mutual abuse, loud altercation, and many violent blows and scuffles, the combatants fell upon that which could make no resistance, the materials before them. They demolished the scenes, tore up the benches, broke the lustres and girandoles, and did in a short time so much mischief to the inside of the theatre, that it could scarce be repaired in several days. During the heat of this ruinous business Mr. Garrick felt himself in a very odd situation; he thought his life was in danger from the ungovernable rage of the people, who threatened to demolish his house. He, who had been so long the idol of the publick, was now openly abused and execrated. He found himself reduced to the necessity of seeking protection from the soldiery. The mob indeed went so far as to break his windows, and to commit other acts of violence.

When we calmly look back upon this theatrical storm, and the wreck which followed it, if we should find just reason to blame Mr. Garrick for

persisting to maintain a hopeless contest against a large majority of his best friends and constant customers, we may, at the same time, condemn that publick which could reject an entertainment, merely because a few helpless foreigners who had a just claim to their protection, from their being invited to the service, were employed in it. Had they hissed and exploded the piece because it was not agreeable to their taste, (and sure a more dull and unentertaining shew of pantomime had never been seen on any stage) no man could have blamed them.

If Mr. Lacy's advice had been attended to, the Festival would have been given up at the beginning of the disturbance.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Royal taste in acting.....The Chances revived.....Mrs. Cibber's choice of a comick character.....She resigns it.....Mrs. Abingdon's excellence in Constantia.

AMONGST his many kingly virtues, George the second could not enumerate the patronage of science and love of the Virtù. Poetry, painting, sculpture, and all the imitative arts, were neither understood nor encouraged by him. When Hogarth presented him with his admirable picture of the March to Finchley, he thought the painter well rewarded with the donation of a guinea. Garrick's excellence in acting was as little admired by his Majesty as the humour of Hogarth.

It was with difficulty the good king could be persuaded, that he who represented so naturally the atrocious acts of a Richard III. could in reality be an honest man: however, Taswell, who acted the lord mayor of London, in the same play, engaged his attention; the king thought him an excellent city magistrate, and laughed heartily at his burlesque oratory. The players, indeed, by their dressing of the mayor and his brethren, and giving the parts to a comick actor and a parcel of scene-men, seem to have designedly thrown a kind of ridicule, where the author certainly never intended any. However, the king had no aversion to the entertainments of the stage, and he generally bespoke

a play twice or thrice in a twelvemonth. But it appeared that he was best pleased with those dramattick pieces which abounded in low humour and extravagant plot; the London Cuckolds and Fair Quaker of Deal were in more estimation with him, than the best written comedies in the English language.

The readers will not, I hope, be displeased, if I should record an anecdote of the royal taste for scenes of a peculiar cast. He had, when prince of Wales, seen the tragedy of Venice Preserv'd; but on his reading the play, he found the character of Aquilina, the Venetian courtesan, had been entirely omitted; and very little of Antonio,\* the foolish orator, her lover, preserved. His royal highness was so diverted with the ridiculous dotages of the old speechmaker, and the perverse and petulant humours of his mistress, that he sent for one of the managers, and ordered him to restore the long exploded scenes of Antonio and Aquilina. Mrs. Horton, who was then a beautiful young actress, played the part of the courtesan, and the facetious Mr. William Pinkethman acted Antonio; but whether the revived scenes gave pleasure to any body but the royal person who commanded them, I could not learn.

The play of the Chances, as altered from Beaumont and Fletcher, by Villiers, duke of Buckingham, had been thrown out of the common list of plays for above twenty-five years. The king happened to recollect that Wilks and Oldfield had greatly di-

\* Antonio was designed by Otway to represent that great statesman Antony earl of Shaftsbury.

verted him in that comedy, and he asked one of his courtiers why it was never played. Mr. Garrick, as soon as he learned the king's inclination to see the Chances, immediately set about reforming the play, so as to render it less exceptionable in language and action.

The manager's great difficulty was, how to cast the part of the second Constantia, in such a manner, as that she might bear some resemblance to the first. Mrs. Pritchard was the only actress in the company who had, in a superiour degree, much vivacity, variety of humour, and engaging action; but this lady was become so bulky in her person, that she could not be mistaken for Miss Macklin, whose figure was elegant, and who acted the first Constantia; but could Mr. Garrick have surmounted this difficulty, Mrs. Cibber, by a clause in her articles, claimed a right to choose any character she pleased to act in a new or revived play. This actress, whose tones of voice were so expressive of all the tender passions, and was by nature formed for tragick representation, was unaccountably desirous of acting characters of gayety and humour, to which she was an absolute stranger: she had no idea of comedy, but such as implied a representation of childish simplicity.

Mr. Garrick knew that it was impossible to divert her from the resolution to play Constantia, and therefore gave way to her humour, till the want of applause should admonish her to resign the part.

I need not recall to the reader's mind the great delight which Mr. Garrick gave the publick in Don John. Mrs. Cibber soon grew tired of a part to



which the audience afforded no signs of approbation. Miss Haughton, a young actress, succeeded her for a short time, and merited a good share of applause. But Mr. Garrick, some years after, in Mrs. Abingdon, met with a Constantia who disputed the palm of victory with his Don John. She so happily assumed all the gay airs, peculiar oddities, and various attitudes of an agreeable and frolicsome madcap, that the audience were kept in constant good humour and merriment, which they recompensed by the loudest applause, through all the several scenes in which she acted. The king commanded the Chances, and seemed to enjoy the performance of it.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**Mr. Foote's frequent engagements with the managers of Drury-lane**  
....His *Fondlewife* in the *Old Bachelor*....*Ben in Love* for *Love*,  
&c.....Speaks a prologue, written by Mr. Garrick....His character  
of *Cadwallader*....Disputes about it....How ended.

**MR. FOOTE**, after he had successively presented his whimsical exhibitions, under the title of giving tea, at the unusual hour of twelve o'clock at noon, in the little theatre in the Hay-market, began to apply himself to the writing of farces, or short comedies of two acts, such as the *Knights at the Land's-End*, the *Englishman at Paris*, the *Englishman returned from Paris*, &c. These were some of his introductory pieces to many others more regular and permanent. Before he obtained the royal patent for acting plays at the theatre in the Hay-market, he frequently acted his pieces at Drury-lane in the beginning of the winter. Sometimes he ventured on some important parts in old comedies, such as *Fondlewife* in the *Old Bachelor*, *Sir Paul Pliant* in the *Double Dealer*, and *Ben in Love* for *Love*.

His intimacy with people of the first rank contributed to support him in his feeble attempts upon these masterly characters of Congreve; and it will scarce be credited, that for three nights the boxes were crowded, to see Foote murder the part of *Ben*; for his acting bore no resemblance to nature

and character. He was even destitute of what no man could suppose him to want, a proper confidence in his own abilities ; for surely his Ben was as unentertaining a lump of insipidity as ever a patient audience was presented with ; it was not even a lively mistake of humour.

In his Fondlewife he had luckily remembered that great master of acting, Colley Cibber. In the course of the first scene, he drew the attention of the audience. He merited, and gained, much applause ; but in the progress of the part, he forgot his exemplar, and degenerated into buffoonery. His Sir Paul Pliant was worse, if possible, than his Ben ; for fear restrained him from being outrageous in the sailor : but, in the Knight, he gave a loose to the most ridiculous burlesque, and the vilest grimace. However, the people laughed heartily, and that, he thought, was a full approbation of his grotesque performance. In short, Foote was a despicable player in almost all parts but those which he wrote for himself.

In the summer of 1754, Foote paid a visit to Paris, and many idle reports had been spread concerning him during his residence in that capital. In the winter he acted his Englishman at Paris at Drury-lane ; a farce, in which he played the Englishman with that sort of spirit, which, though not truly comick, was at least bold, and calculated to impose upon an audience. Mr. Garrick wrote a humorous prologue, which Foote spoke. In this the several reports which had been spread about the town concerning him, are set in a very droll and laughable view,

and produced abundance of mirth. The Englishman was acted frequently; and Miss Macklin had, in the young lady of the farce, an opportunity to shew her accomplishments in musick and dancing. In 1757, Mr. Foote's farce of the Author was acted at Drury-lane, which, from his personating a gentleman very well known in the character of Cadwallader, became a very favourite piece.

Mr. A—— was Mr. Foote's intimate acquaintance: an incident which was so far from restraining the wantonness of the writer, that, from the frequent opportunity of conversing with him, and a nearer view of the man in his social and unguarded hours, he gained the readiest means of finishing his picture with the greatest exactness. This Mr. A—— was a man of fortune, allied to many families of distinction; his peculiarities were of so singular a nature, as to render him a very easy prey to the English Aristophanes. In his person he approached to the larger size, but seemed to be incumbered more by his deportment than his corpulence; with a broad unmeaning stare, and awkward step, he seemed to look and walk absurdity. His voice was loud, his manner of speaking boisterous, and his words were uttered rapidly and indistinctly; his head was constantly moving to his left shoulder, with his mouth open, as if to recall what he had inadvertently spoken. Notwithstanding these peculiarities, he was a scholar, and very conversant in the classick authors; he was a master of much knowledge, neither did he want reflection and obser-

vation : he was greatly respected for his good nature, and readiness to do acts of kindness.

Foote could not miss hitting off the exact likeness of a man who was so striking an original, and almost a caricature by nature. Loud bursts of laughter from the boxes were so many acknowledgments of the writer's and actor's skill, and the strong resemblance to the original.

The best of it was, that the gentleman himself made one of the audience ; he enjoyed the jest very heartily, and applauded Foote for drawing his portrait so admirably well.

In short, the farce of the Author was acted a great number of nights before Mr. A—— felt the severity of the satire. But at last the joke became so serious, that whenever he went to any publick place, to the park, the playhouse, to an assembly, or a coffeehouse, he was immediately pointed at ; the name of Mr. Cadwallader was whispered loud enough to be very distinctly heard ; laughs were sometimes half suppressed, at other times more freely indulged. His best friends avoided his approach, for fear of proving accessaries to his being made a publick laughing-stock.

He was at length rendered so unhappy, that he was determined, if possible, to get the farce suppressed ; and here lay some difficulty ; for as long as Foote got money by exposing him, it was hopeless to think of prevailing upon him to stop the abuse. When gain was in view, humanity was out of the question ; and Mr. A—— had himself unluckily

given authority to the satire, by personally encouraging the propagation of it.

All overtures that were made to the writer were to no purpose. He then applied to Mr. Garrick, who heard his complaints with politeness; but the gentleman was at first so warm, that he declared, if the farce was not suppressed, that he should demand satisfaction of the manager. Mr. Garrick smiled at Mr. A——'s heat, and told him, that, upon an honourable occasion, he should not decline a gentleman's invitation; but begged him to consider the disadvantages under which he laboured; that he was much more advanced in years than himself, and was grown somewhat corpulent and unweildly. However, as he really felt for Mr. A——, he advised him to apply to the lord chamberlain, a nobleman who, he was sure, had too much humanity to suffer any gentleman to be hurt by personal representation; as for himself, he was only a sharer in the Author with Mr. Lacy and Mr. Foote, but should think himself very happy to contribute to the ease and satisfaction of his mind. The duke of Devonshire, a nobleman whose memory will be dear to every Englishman, who was then lord chamberlain, upon the first application, removed the cause of Mr. Cadwallader's complaint.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Dr. Browne's *Barbarossa* and *Athelstan*.....Some observations on them.....The author's friendship for Mr. Garrick and Dr. Warburton.....His eulogium of them in his *Estimate of the Times*.....His vindication of himself against Dr. Lowth.....His character.

**Dr.** Browne's tragedies of *Barbarossa* and *Athelstan* were successively acted under the management of Mr. Garrick, in 1755 and 1756.

The plot of *Barbarossa* is founded on the strongest of all human connexions, filial and maternal affection; a son made known to a mother who had supposed him to be dead, and had long deplored his loss, is a fable on which several of our most affecting modern tragedies are founded; nor do I think it in the power of wit to laugh away the strongest feelings of human nature, though even a Sheridan should attempt it. But I am apt to think some excesses of action, or extravagancies of passion, bordering upon fustian or bombast, have been the marks at which the author of *A Tragedy Rehearsed*, has aimed the shafts of his ridicule.

Mr. Garrick, who was quite a master of stage evolution, assisted the author in the disposition of his plot, by suggesting such incidents as would, in all probability, heighten the distress of the scene, and produce theatrical effect. In *Barbarossa* there is abundance of that bustle and tumult which the actors call the business of a play; and some

there is, indeed, which naturally arises from the subject. The discovery of Achmet to Othman, in the second act, was truly dramatick, and had a fine effect. The interview between Zaphira and Achmet, the mother and the son, in the third act, was artfully managed and highly supported by Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Cibber. Irene's character is not unlike that of Selima in *Tamerlane*, as *Barbarossa* bears a strong resemblance to *Bajazet* in the same play. Some of the incidents preparatory to the catastrophe appeared in the shape of stage tricks, and such as are formed to keep the audience in suspense, and to create a more striking catastrophe. The play has merit upon the whole, and still keeps its rank in the theatre.

Mr. Garrick wrote the prologue and epilogue.—The first he spoke himself in the character of a country boy, in which he described the turtle feasts and gluttony of the citizens, and the dissolute manners of a fine lady addicted to gaming, and other town fopperies, in a kind of slight satirical vein, well adapted to produce much temporary mirth. Woodward spoke the epilogue in the character of a fine gentleman, which was little more than a flimsy comment on the prologue, and depended merely on the action of the speaker. Woodward, on the first night of speaking the epilogue, felt all the timidity of a young actor; he was so disconcerted, that he could scarce muster courage to go through it.

Athelstan followed the next year; I believe much was expected from it, but it fell short in success to *Barbarossa*. The fable seemed to be well chosen, but it was not happily conducted. Some very af-



fecting situations of distress in this play promised great and striking effects; but though Mr. Garrick in Athelstan, and Mrs. Cibber in Thyra, exerted all their power; the former in displaying the turbulent emotions of the heart, and the latter the fine pathos arising from tender sensibility; yet all would not do; the audience seemed not to feel the distress of the characters. The language of Athelstan is more laboured than that of Barbarossa. The subject afforded an occasion to introduce the terrible graces: but, I think, the author was not always successful in his attempts; he strained too much, and was too fond of the epick, and sometimes the descriptive, style.

The dramattick pieces of Dr. Browne were inferior to his other works. His Essays on the Characteristics of Shaftsbury are deservedly esteemed by all lovers of learning and persons of taste.

The great success of this book, it is to be feared, had too strong an effect upon the author's mind. His abilities were considerable; but he certainly did not underrate them. He had a just sense of Mr. Garrick's attention to the success of his tragedies; and his gratitude broke forth in terms so warm and enthusiastick, that it would be improper in me to omit them here.

In his Estimate of the Times he charges the age with profligacy, dissipation, folly, and effeminacy. In searching for exceptions to a general rule, he breaks into the following expressions.

"Let us then search the theatre for the remains of a manly taste; and here, apparently at least, it must be acknowledged, we shall find it. A great genius

hath arisen to dignify the stage, who, when it was sinking into the lowest insipidity, restored it to the fulness of its ancient splendour, and, with a variety of powers beyond example established *Nature, Shakspeare, and himself.*

“ But as the attractions of the theatre arise from a complication of causes, beyond those of any other entertainment; so while the judicious critic *admires his original excellencies*, it may well be questioned, whether the crowd be not drawn by certain secondary circumstances, rather than by a discernment of *his real powers*. Need we any other proof of this than the conduct of his fashionable hearers, who sit with the same face of admiration at Lear, an opera, and a pantomime ?”

This is an unaccountable mixture of praise and censure on the actor and his auditors, where truth is hazarded, and satire ill applied. We are well assured, that Mr. Garrick’s excellencies, in the choleric king, produced all the visible effects of just admiration from the audience; and we may presume to say, that the author talks very idly, where he says, the same people who saw him in Lear, (from whom he always drew the most affecting sensibility, even to the shedding of tears) were equally affected with an opera or a pantomime.

In this celebrated Estimate of the Times, we meet with great inequalities; amidst many bright thoughts and just observations, delivered in a very copious and animated style, we shall find a stage propensity to novelty and paradox. Did solidity of judgment keep pace with the rapidity of his fancy, we should

do nothing but admire. His despair of the publick, from his viewing the dark side of the question, and his misrepresenting of objects, sometimes throws him into the most gloomy and melancholy reflections. What can we say of the following postulatium ?

“ But if, in any nation, the number of *these superior minds* be daily decreasing, from the growing manners of the times ; what can a nation so circumstanced have more to fear, than that, in another age, *a general cloud of ignorance may overshadow it ?*”

The age was so dissipated and worthless, so lost to all sense of duty and manly virtue, that Dr. Browne could find no exceptions to the charge of universal insignificancy, but Dr. Warburton and Mr. Garrick. This was a compliment they purchased at the expense of all their contemporaries, with the certain consequence of gaining much obloquy from many envious and malicious cavillers.

It appears that Dr. Browne was of a very warm temper and a haughty spirit. His friendship for Mr. Garrick not having any rivalry from literary spleen, continued uninterrupted to his death. But Dr. Warburton, it seems, exacted more condescension to his will, more implicit resignation to his dictates, and a firmer reliance on the certainty of his opinions, than Dr. Browne was willing to pay. About a year before his death, he was drawn into a publick expostulation with Dr. Lowth, who, in his letter to bishop Warburton, intimated that Dr. Browne was the bishop's *creature*, or *obsequious deputy*. He resented this attack with much honest warmth, but with great good manners. Dr. Lowth

answered him with great civility, and cleared himself from any intention to derogate from his character. I was sorry to observe in Dr. Browne's letter to Dr. Lowth, some expressions which seemed to contradict his general language in conversation, respecting the bishop of Gloucester.

In his letter to Dr. Lowth he asserts, that he had frequently, not only in his writings, but in conversation, contradicted particular notions of the bishop; and that, notwithstanding this freedom which he had used with this great man, their friendship was as unbroken as ever. In short, he seems to insinuate, that Warburton was of too generous and noble a mind to exact that mean submission to his will which Dr. Lowth had accused Dr. Browne of paying him. How this declaration can be reconciled to Dr. Browne's constant complaint among his friends, of bishop Warburton's overbearing temper and tyrannical behaviour, I cannot see.

Dr. Hurd's pliability and suppleness of disposition he made no scruple to talk of in very plain terms. "I cannot bring myself," said Browne, "to give up the freedom of my mind to Warburton, and therefore we do not agree; *but Dr. Hurd will never quarrel with him.*"—Intimating very plainly, that this learned divine had no opinion of his own, in contradiction to that of his right reverend friend and patron.

Dr. Browne had a soul full of gratitude; his honour and integrity were unquestioned by all who knew him.

## CHAPTER XX.

A manager's difficulty arising from the offer of new plays and farces  
....Reasons assigned for refusing them....Colley Cibber's behaviour  
to authors....Mr. Garrick puts a negative on Douglas....Cleone and  
the Orphan of China....Agrees to refer the merit of the latter to  
the arbitration of Mr. Whitehead....Manœuvres of the author and  
manager, who is obliged to act it.

THE most difficult and irksome task which a manager of a theatre can, perhaps, undergo, arises from his connexion with authors. To accept, or refuse a play, is a matter of much more consequence than the world in general imagines. The writing a dramatick piece, without the assistance of a candid and intelligent manager, and, perhaps, the farther support of a considerable party, will scarce answer the views of the author. The time bestowed in rehearsing the piece, and the expense of new scenes, dresses, musick, and other decorations, make it often very ineligible to a director of a theatre to accept a new play; especially when it is considered, that the reviving of a good old play will answer his end of profit, and reputation too, perhaps, as well. Booth often declared in publick company, that he and his partners lost money by new plays; and that, if he were not obliged to it, he would seldom give his consent to perform one of them. But Booth did not reflect that old plays gained strength and stability by being intermixed with new, and that the publick would soon grow tired with seeing a constant repetition of the same dramas.

But the manager runs the risque of disobliging an author and all his friends, on whose work he has presumed to put a negative. Cibber and Garrick, who were authors as well as players and managers, experienced the most violent resentments for not thinking so well of a writer's work as he and his friends did. The man to whom nature has denied the genius to compose a play, may have abilities to strike out a very malignant satire. He who is an utter stranger to dramatic poetry, may sting with an essay, wound with a paragraph, or bite with an epigram. Colley Cibber, I believe, deserved many of those keen reproaches and bitter sarcasms, which are to be read in several pamphlets published during his administration of the stage; for his denial of a new piece was not attended with that delicacy and politeness which is so necessary upon an unwelcome repulse, and which must, however gently delivered, overwhelm an author who is obliged to hear it with confusion and vexation. Cibber, by his sole authority, obliged Mr. Hughes to alter the most material incident in his *Siege of Damascus*, and thereby rendered feeble, and almost ineffectual, the author's scene between Phocyas and Eudocia, after his betraying the city to the Saracens: for Mr. Hughes had caused the hero, in order to save Damascus, and the lives of his mistress and the citizens, in the agony of his soul, to turn Mahometan. But Colley, with his usual confidence, declared that the audience would not bear a hero who could change his religion. When Mr. Fenton read his tragedy of *Mariamne* to Cibber, he not only rejected it, but spoke in the

following insolent manner to the learned author: "Sir, will you take the advice of a friend? apply yourself to some honest and laborious calling; the belles lettres and you will never agree; you have no manner of genius for poetry." This charge against Cibber was printed in a pamphlet called the *Laureat*, soon after he had published the *Apology for his Life*, 1740: but this play, when acted soon after at Lincoln's-inn-fields, raised the sinking credit of the company, and established the characters of *Boheme* and *Mrs. Seymour*, who acted the parts of *Herod* and *Mariamne*. Not to detain the reader any longer than I ought, about Colley Cibber's petulance, I shall only observe, that it is a well known fact, that he refused the *Beggar's Opera*, and he is charged with taking a particular delight to mortify young authors; his practice of giving back their plays he wantonly called *the choaking of singing birds*. This anecdote is to be found in the same pamphlet of the *Laureat*.

Mr. Garrick had, in common with other managers, his passions and prejudices, which sometimes warped his judgment, and led him to decide improperly on the merit of plays. He was a writer as well as Cibber, and was successful too. If he now and then gave the preference to the children of his own brain, even to better works, it will not be deemed, by candid people, amongst those faults which are unpardonable.

But whatever other part of his conduct to authors might be deemed exceptionable, he never could justly be taxed with rudeness, or incivility. He rather,

in his treatment of writers, carried his politeness to excess, and in the first ardour of his friendship, he was apt to promise more than he found it possible afterwards to perform. His inclination to temporize, I believe, was often productive of delays and excuses, which ended with a disappointment to the author, and a quarrel in consequence of it ensued, which a more decisive conduct might have prevented.

It is very certain, that no manager was better qualified to serve an author in the correcting, pruning, or enlarging of a dramatick piece, than Mr. Garrick. His acute judgment and great experience had rendered him a consummate judge of stage effect; and many authors now living, men of the greatest merit, will own their obligations to his taste and sagacity.

It was his misfortune sometimes to err egregiously, both in the choice and the rejection of new plays. In the years 1756, 1758, 1759, he successively rejected the Douglas of Mr. John Home, Dodsley's Cleone, and the Orphan of China by Mr. Murphy. That great interest was made for Douglas cannot be questioned: the author's connexions with some great persons at Leicester-house, who encouraged his abilities and favoured his interest, we should have imagined, would have superseded all objections, and brought on the play without hesitation. But Mr. Garrick's opinion of it could not be removed; he thought the plot was too simple and undramatick. But, surely, a mother discovering a son whom she had long mourned, and given over for lost, was truly dramatick; and a picture of ancient manners, during the times of the feudal system, which nearly



corresponded with the days of chivalry, was a novelty that deserved attention. Mr. Garrick had the double mortification of seeing this play acted, with great approbation and success, at Covent-garden, and of being obliged to act two of Home's tragedies written with inferior force. Agis was very often played, it is true, but that was owing to the prodigious efforts of the manager and of the author's friends to support it. His majesty, then prince of Wales, commanded it three or four times. The Siege of Aquileia, which followed soon after, was supposed to be weaker in composition than Agis; at least it was not so much followed.

The plays of Mr. Home are unquestionably the productions of a classical scholar, and an accurate and elegant writer. But it has been questioned, by the critics, whether his genius is warm enough to correspond with the true ends of tragedy; whether he is capable of great energy of sentiment, and of exciting those feelings that never fail to accompany representations of distress, and which melt an audience into tears. But whatever may be said of his other plays, in Douglas there is a pathos not unworthy our best writers of tragedies; Lady Randolph too is a finished character.

Mr. Dodsley's Cleone had been read and approved by Dr. Johnson, and many persons of taste and learning; and however it may be granted that there are defects in the economy of its fable, Cleone speaks the language of nature, and, when acted, drew tears from many brilliant audiences.

Mr. Garrick, though he had rejected Cleone with great marks of contempt, and termed it a cruel, bloody, and unnatural play; yet he was extremely apprehensive that the publick would be of a different opinion, and he prepared to meet its first appearance at Covent-garden with all his strength. He had for some time applied himself to the study of Marplot in the Busy Body, and was determined to oppose this character (which he was sure the town would be eager to see) to the tragedy of Dodsley. When Cleone was advertised, Marplot was announced against it. The friends of the tragedy were alarmed, and deferred the representation, by advertising it to a further date. Mr. Garrick immediately postponed the Busy Body. However, after a few dodging manœuvres of this kind, Cleone and the Busy Body were acted on the same night; and though it was a kind of up-hill labour to bring the people of fashion to side against a new character of Mr. Garrick, yet there was a handsome shew of very fashionable folks at Cleone. The manager made a sort of merit of his not acting on Dodsley's benefit nights; but it must be confessed by those who esteemed Mr. Garrick most, that his conduct in the whole dispute was unjustifiable; and that he treated a worthy man, and an old acquaintance, with severity and unkindness. Many reasons were assigned for his particular conduct on this occasion: it is possible that his judgment was really against the play. I remember to have heard Mr. Dodsley declare, that after Mr. Garrick had given back his play with a positive refusal to act it, that he afterwards sent for Cleone once

more, with a full intention to give it a re-examination, and a solemn promise to bring it on the stage, if the tragedy, on a farther perusal, should deserve it. However, the result of his critical attention to the real merit of the piece, was a confirmed disapprobation.

It was conjectured, with some probability, that his obstinacy in persisting to reject this play was owing to the inferiority of the part assigned him, when compared with that of Cleone. Mrs. Cibber, in that part, would have certainly eclipsed all the other characters in the tragedy.

His Marplot, though much applauded, did not answer his own or the publick expectation. He was brisk, busy, and impertinent. He understood all the tricks of the part; or, in the language of the playhouse, the business of it; but the piercing intelligence of his look did not convey the idea of folly and absurdity, with a vacancy of countenance peculiar to the character. He endeavoured to support his consequence by an epilogue spoken in the character of Marplot; but he soon discontinued the part.\*

Mr. Murphy's Orphan of China was attended with much more anxiety to the manager than any dramatick piece since he had the power of accepting or refusing plays. Nor can it well be conceived why he should dispute the merit of a play which, besides the reputation of the writer, had the additional merit of Voltaire's name to recommend it.

\* C. Fox, when a boy, being asked by lord Holland, when Mr. Garrick dined with him, what he thought of his Marplot; said, Mr. Garrick could not look foolish enough for the part.

This whole story of the dispute between Mr. Garrick and Mr. Murphy contains such a history of an author's and manager's manœuvres in evading each other's schemes, that I doubt not of the reader's indulgence in dwelling a little upon a subject which I think will afford him some entertainment.

The play was read, I believe, more than once very carefully by Mr. Garrick. After keeping it some time, he made several remarks and observations upon it. These were recommended to the perusal of the author, whom the players have constantly found to be so far from proudly undervaluing their advice, that he was always extremely attentive to their least suggestions. After profiting by Mr. Garrick's criticisms, Mr. Murphy returned the play to the manager, who again pointed out more mistakes. Well; these passages were either given up, or defended in such a manner, that Mr. Garrick appeared to be satisfied with them. After a variety of meetings between them, and much and frequent altercation, one dreading the other's impetuosity, and one studiously guarding against the other's art, Mr. Garrick declared the play was not fit for the stage, and advised the author to change his plan, or make such alterations as he imagined would give a much better stage effect than the Orphan of China could possibly produce in its present state. The author, tired out with perpetual objections to this scene, and that act; to this incident, and to that speech; asked Mr. Garrick, if he did not think there was a man now living, who was as good a judge of plays, and one that could determine as just-

ly of the worth of a dramattick piece, as himself? This was granted. "Well, then," said Mr. Murphy, "will you be determined by a writer of plays, a man of honour and candour; one whose own pieces have been acted with success? Have you any objection to Mr. William Whitehead's decision of the merit of my tragedy?"—"By no means." Mr. Whitehead accepted of the award, and, in very explicit terms, declared his opinion in favour of the Orphan of China.

The manager was not a little mortified to find his judgment thus contradicted by his friend and admirer, the poet laureat. However, the parts of the play were now cast and divided. Mr. Garrick, Mr. Mossop, Mr. Holland and Mrs. Cibber, were to be the principal actors; but Mrs. Cibber's state of health, at that time, was so precarious, that she could not be depended upon for the character of Mandane. In this distress the manager advised the author to reserve his play till the great actress should be so far recovered, as to be able to do justice to her part in this play.

Mrs. Yates was then a young actress of merit, who had occasionally given some proofs of genius, but was so unacquainted with the stage, that it was thought hazardous by the manager to trust so great a part as Mandane to her performance. However, Mr. Murphy having privately consulted the lady, she presumed to undertake it, if he would take the pains to instruct her. When the author proposed to Mr. Garrick the disposal of the part of Mandane to Mrs. Yates, he was extremely apprehensive that *she* would never be equal to so great a task. "Sir,

you had better wait till Mrs. Cibber's indisposition is abated." However, he could not refuse to hear her read the part. Mrs. Yates, from a concerted plan, contrived, at the first rehearsal, to appear unacquainted with Mandane, though she was then almost mistress of the character. Mr. Garrick thus deceived, declared it was impossible the play could be acted till Mrs. Cibber's health was restored. Mr. Murphy persisted in his resolution to try the abilities of the young actress, and put off a further rehearsal for a week or ten days; during that time he constantly attended Mrs. Yates, and gave her such lessons, that he was persuaded her efforts would exceed the manager's and the publick's expectations. At the next rehearsal Mrs. Yates now gave such proofs of superiour intelligence, and acquaintance with the part, that Mr. Garrick seemed to be quite transported with joy; in a seeming rapture he took Mr. Murphy by the hand, and declared he was quite satisfied with his Mandane, and that the play should be infallibly acted as soon as possible.

The tragedy of the Orphan of China was universally approved, and acted many nights with the greatest approbation and applause.

Mr. Garrick, perhaps, never shewed his power of moving the passions to more advantage; he improved every situation in which the author had placed his character, and distinguished himself by that energy of speaking and acting, in which he excelled all men of his profession. Mrs. Yates, from her excellent acting of Mandane, became immediately a favourite with the publick.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**Mr. Ralph....His application to poetry....Partnership with H. Fielding....His Astrologer....Acquaintance with Mrs. Cooper....His political writings....Introduction to Mr. Garrick....Their quarrel....His progress in politicks....Death....Mr. Shirley's Edward, the Black Prince....Its success....His Orestes....His resentment of Mr. Garrick's refusal of it....Their reconciliation....Dr. P. Hiffernan....Education, &c....Satire on managers....Dramatick writings....Quarrel and reconciliation with the managers, &c.**

**I**N the foregoing chapter I told the reader of the manager's difficulties in his transactions with authors; and impartially related the history of Mr. Garrick's mistakes in judgment, respecting his refusal of plays which he ought to have acted. I shall now, by way of contrast, change the scene, and give an account of the misbehaviour of some dramatick writers to Mr. Garrick. And, I believe, in order of time, I ought to begin with the celebrated Mr. James Ralph, the political writer.

The most early notice I can find of this gentleman, is in the *Dunciad*; in those memorable lines upon his Poem on Night.

Silence, ye wolves, while Ralph to Cynthia howls,  
Making night hideous! Answer him ye owls!

Ralph had rather a liking, or violent inclination, to be an author of plays, than abilities to compose them. His first attempt in dramatick poetry was the *Fashionable Lady*, in 1729; and soon after he

wrote the *Fall of Essex*, altered from the *Unhappy Favourite of Banks*; but so low was his credit as a writer, that he was obliged to apply to the manager of Goodman's-fields to get his pieces acted. The company was then composed of raw unfledged players; and we may reasonably conjecture, that the acting of the *Fashionable Lady and Essex* did not raise much profit to Mr. Ralph. I have seen a pamphlet upon the Publick Buildings of London, printed about the year 1734, which was attributed to Mr. Ralph. His itch for poetry and plays, about this time, was still upon him, and continued till he was fully engrossed by politicks. About the year 1735, he commenced a managing partner with Mr. Fielding in the Hay-market theatre. Ralph's *Astrologer*, written upon the plan of the *Alchymist*, was very often rehearsed there, but never acted. The players in general were disgusted with the obsolete style of the play, and the almost forgotten scheme of hunting for the philosopher's stone, with an intent to cheat bubbles of their money.

The great success of Fielding's *Pasquin* put an end to all thoughts of the *Astrologer* for that time; and poor Ralph, I believe, had no other share in the management than viewing and repining at the success of his partner. However, he espoused a play of Mrs. Cooper (author of the *Rival Widows*) called *The Nobleman*, a comedy, which, I believe, was acted at the Hay-market in May, 1736, and condemned the first night, and never afterwards resumed; to the great mortification of Mr. Ralph and the lady, who had formed great expectations of its suc-



cess. This play was never printed. Though Mr. Ralph continued a poacher in dramatick poetry, and was a great reader of old plays, as if he thought he could steal the art of writing from them; yet I do not recollect that he wrote any thing more than a forgotten farce for the stage. He now became a constant attender on the levees of great men, and at last found out what were his real talents in writing; he luckily applied himself to politicks. The duchess of Marlborough, about the year 1742, having published *Memoirs of her Life*, Mr. Ralph was employed to answer it, which he performed with ability, and called it *The other Side of the Question*. This book was written with so much art, and made so interesting, by the author's management, that it sold very well.

I shall not pursue this writer through all the pamphlets he wrote, and all the periodical papers of politicks he was engaged in; but must not forget this circumstance, that he grew so formidable towards the latter end of Walpole's administration, that it was thought proper to buy him off with an income. His most famous work was a *Continuation of Guthrie's History of England*, which has been highly applauded by politicians of a certain cast; by some too, who, I firmly believe, were too indolent to read the book whose praises they circulated; by lord Melcombe and his family physician, Dr. Thompson, who were very assiduous in bestowing magnificent encomiums upon it. This book recommended him to the notice of Lord Bolingbroke. He was frequently with lord Melcombe;

but it is confidently and truly said, that a silly mistake of a domestick had very near caused a rupture between them. My lord gave orders to his servant to go to the historian, who lived not far from his lordship at Isleworth, and take a card with him for a dinner invitation to Mr. Ralph and his wife; the fellow mistook the word *card* for *cart*, and set out with one full speed to bring them to his lord's house. This supposed indignity offended the pride of Ralph, and who, with great gravity, sent back the messenger and his carriage, with a long expostulatory letter.

Lord Melcombe, I think, introduced Ralph to Mr. Garrick. The dramatick fit returned; and he prevailed upon Mr. Garrick, in 1744, who was then acting manager of Drury-lane theatre, to introduce his play of the *Astrologer*, (which he had in vain, as I have already said, endeavoured to get acted in the Little Theatre in the Hay-market) to Mr. Fleetwood, the patentee.

The play was accepted, rehearsed carefully, and acted. Mr. Garrick spoke the prologue, and wrote the epilogue, which was given to Mrs. Woffington. But so little expectation had the publick entertained of this old comedy, that, as we learn from Ralph's advertisement, not more than a sum of twenty-one pounds was the receipt of the treasury on the first night of acting it. Still more to mortify his vanity, when the manager very good-naturedly gave him a chance of a third night, by advertising the play a second time, he was obliged to shut up his doors for

want of an audience. This intimation the author himself gives us, full of indignation, and in the high spirit of resentment, for the want of taste in the publick to relish the Astrologer. In the same place he informs us, that notwithstanding this neglect, the writer was not unknown to the great, nor destitute of private friends ; and to return contempt for contempt, in the title-page of the Astrologer, he called it a Comedy, as it was *once* acted at the theatre-royal in Drury-lane ; and I dare say he thought himself quits with the publick by this affectation of indifference.

Though Mr. Ralph was in the full career of his political progress, caressed by the great, and employed by the booksellers, yet the dramattick frenzy had not left him ; he was continually teasing Mr. Garrick to encourage him in his error. In vain did the manager endeavour to open his eyes, and to convince him of his inability to prosper in the mimic world. The acting of Albumazar, the original from whence his beloved Astrologer was taken, gave him uneasiness, we may suppose, which nothing could remove but the ill success of that play. And, indeed, we may venture to presage, that such will be the fate of these old dramattick pieces, all of which, or, at least, most of them, bear such marks of ancient and forgotten manners and customs, that they cannot, without being entirely refitted, please the present generation. I would be understood always to except the works of Shakspeare, which being founded in that nature which will be eternally the same, and not dependent

upon variable fashion and local custom, must please as long as our language shall last.

But although Mr. Garrick could not succeed in giving Mr. Ralph a just idea of his disqualification for writing plays, he had so much friendship for him, that he prevailed upon the minister, Mr. Pelham, to settle a pension upon him of 200*l.* per annum; for, as well as I can recollect, that was the sum.

I remember to have heard Mr. Garrick tell the manner of Mr. Pelham's behaviour to him on the occasion. He assured Mr. Garrick, that he ever made it a rule not to be afraid of any political or satirical writer whatever; nor did he ever choose to buy any of them off by pension or pecuniary reward. He said, indeed, that his brother, the duke of Newcastle, was more tender than himself on that head, and had occasionally shewn more timidity than such matters deserved. However, he continued, "as Mr. Ralph is your friend, Mr. Garrick, I shall with pleasure, and to oblige you, grant him a pension."

This was an obligation which, we should imagine, would have had a powerful effect on the mind of Mr. Ralph, and have tied him for ever, by the motives of gratitude, to Mr. Garrick; but it fell out quite otherwise; a certain unaccountable coldness succeeded to an apparent warmth of friendship between these gentlemen. The pretence for Mr. Ralph's disgust I could never learn; but have always attributed it to the manager's refusing some comedy or farce, which he had imprudently pressed upon him.

Mr. Garrick's cause of resentment may be seen in *Ralph's Case of Authors* by profession, published in the year 1758; in which the author, in a fit of spleen, owing to his imagined consequence in the learned world, and his deep resentment for the neglect of his services, gives a long history of authors, chiefly political, and their importance to the publick; with a minute account of the rewards of some, and the misfortunes of others. But this narrative is preceded by a view of the stage, in which he directly attacks the avarice and tyranny of the managers, who, content to live upon the old stock of genius provided to their hands by Shakspeare, Dryden, Otway, Congreve, &c. give no encouragement to new compositions. "The manager," says he, "whether player or harlequin, must be the sole pivot on which the whole machine is both to move and rest; there is no drawback on the profit of the night in old plays; and any access of reputation to a dead author carries no impertinent claims and invidious distinctions along with it."

That the cause of this quarrel with Mr. Garrick was theatrical disappointment, the following quotation, I think, will tend, at least, to prove. "I am as much an admirer of Mr. Garrick and his excellencies, as I ought to be; and I envy him no part of his good fortune. But then, though I am free to acknowledge he was made for the stage, I cannot be brought to think the stage was made *only* for *him*, or that the fate of every dramattick writer ought either to be at *his* mercy, or that of any *other* manager whatsoever; and the single consideration that there is

no alternative but to fly from him, in case of any neglect or contempt, to Mr. Rich, is enough to deter any man in his senses from embarking a second time on such a hopeless voyage."

After finishing what he had to say concerning the fates and fortunes of authors, he once more returned to the subject which was nearest his heart.

"When the playhouse is named, I make it a point to pull off my hat, and think myself obliged to the lowest implement belonging to it." He then glances, I think, at Woodward, whom he affects to consider as nothing but a mere harlequin, and whose success offended his pride. "I am ready, to make my best acknowledgments to a harlequin, who has continence enough to look upon an author in the green room, of what consideration soever, without laughing at him."

In the following paragraph he seems to have collected all his strength to give Mr. Garrick a deadly blow, at least such as he was sure would wound him deeply.

"Instead, therefore, of talking of the present *dignified* state of the stage, I think we ought to talk of its *thriving* state. We have now one or two great performers; and time was when we had a constellation of such, when the *majesty* as well as *energy* of tragedy, the *grace* as well as *glee* of comedy, were displayed at full; and yet at that time the nightly charge of the house did not exceed 45*l*. whereas it is now said to be eighty."

Since the days of Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, the stage had never been so flourishing, nor so well

stocked with good actors of both sexes, in tragedy and comedy, as at the period of which this disappointed author speaks. In tragedy, besides Mr. Garrick, Mr. Barry, and Mrs. Cibber; they had very good seconds in Mossop, Ross, Sparks, Holland, Smith, Dyer, Mrs. Bellamy, Mrs. Ward, &c. And in comedy, Garrick, Woodward, Smith, Yates, Shuter, Collins, Berry, Palmer, Taswell, Arthur, Dunstall, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Green, &c.

I question if Mr. Ralph would have admitted that a select set of actors formed from the united companies of Drury-lane and Covent-garden, could have been capable of doing justice to any of his dramatick offspring.

The age, indeed, in this author's opinion, was become so insensible, and so dead to the merit of authors, especially men so enlightened and accomplished as himself, that in a fit of despondence he resigns all hopes of reforming a generation so untoward. "I am neither an Amphion or an Orpheus; nor are the stocks, stones, and brutes, to be humanized by any species of incantation in my power to practise upon them. I throw my bread upon the waters, without any hopes of finding it after many days."

Here, I must beg leave to suppose, that the author either forgot himself, or was, in the hurry of resentment, led to say what he did not believe. Hopes he certainly had, and those not ill founded; he was then patronised by a noble lord, whose interest afterwards gained him a very large appointment.

And to give Ralph his due, he laboured very diligently to merit the patronage he obtained. The reader shall judge of his political principles from the following short paragraph.

“ Since, therefore, men think by halves, write by halves, fight by halves, and do every thing by halves, without any sense of glory, dread of shame, or regard for any publick consideration whatsoever ; suppose our most *gracious sovereign was restored to his prerogative*, his ministers to their full freedom of acting according to conscience, and the people to the full benefit of the immense supplies they annually give for annual disappointments.”

The doctrine of this specimen of our author's politicks needs no comment, especially if we reflect, that it was written when the administration of Mr. Pitt had rendered the nation as happy and united as it has since been unfortunate and divided. And this alone is sufficient to entail the name of a mean hireling upon Ralph to the latest posterity. In the Case of Authors by profession there is much curious matter, especially in that part of it which relates to authors and authorship ; though in some passages he is greatly mistaken. His observations are generally shrewd, though not always just. In short, it is an entertaining farrago of anecdote, criticism, spleen, and resentment.

The pamphlet produced the effect upon Mr. Garrick which the author intended ; for he felt all the poignancy of the satire which was aimed at him, and resented the ingratitude of the writer in such a manner as, perhaps, rendered Ralph himself more



uneasy at last than he had made his friend. I believe that Mr. Garrick never spoke to him afterwards, and refused to be in any company where he might have the chance of meeting him.

He was many years since invited by the first law officer of the crown to dinner; a gentleman who has since, with great honour, filled the highest law department in the state.\* The invitation was accepted with pleasure; but when he was told that Ralph was to be one of the guests, Mr. Garrick begged to be excused; for he declared he would not sit in company with the most ungrateful man in the kingdom.

Upon the death of George the Second, Ralph attained the summit of his wishes; by the interest of the earl of Bute, a pension of six hundred pounds per annum was bestowed on him. However, he did not live to enjoy above one half year's income. The gout had often attacked him with great violence; a fit of that terrible distemper carried him off, at his house in Chiswick, in the year 1761.

Mr. Ralph had read a great deal, and was very conversant in the history and politicks of this country. He applied himself, with great assiduity, to the study of all writings upon party matters; and had drawn together a prodigious number of pamphlets relating to the disputes between the two contending parties, the Whigs and Tories. His Review of the Reign of Charles II. and James II., with the History of King William III., have been much and deservedly commended. But the author has

\* Lord Camden, then Attorney General.

taken effectual care to defeat the end he proposed, of making his work universally read. It is a book in two large volumes, which contains almost as many words as Thuanus's History. The Review, indeed, is a noble magazine for a future historian to consult; but to the general reader it is intolerably tedious and disgusting: the narrative is almost continually interrupted by a commentary three times as large as the text; and the margin is loaded with extracts from a thousand pamphlets.

He has been called by some a great political writer; an honourable title, which no slave of a party, a man who does not write from principle, but from pay, can possibly deserve. He was an excellent party writer, indeed; and therefore stands distinguished from many others of the same stamp, and especially from Oldmixon, an author paid by the Whigs, a man who had less knowledge than Ralph, and whose style was equally petulant and mean. Mr. Ralph was in his conversation agreeable and instructive: and when not seized with an affected gravity and assumed importance, entertaining. He could never throw off entirely a certain formality, which he acquired, perhaps, from his first business of a schoolmaster.

Mr. Shirley is now living, and was originally a considerable Portuguese merchant. His play of Edward the Black Prince was acted before the run of Mr. Whitehead's Roman Father, a tragedy, which was partly translated from the celebrated Horace of Corneille, and would have merited very great commendation if the author had conducted his fabric

with probability. The death of Horatia protracted to the fifth act, after having received her death's wound in the fourth, throws a languor over the concluding scenes of the tragedy, for which no merit of language can atone.

The Black Prince is a name so illustrious in history, that much was to be expected from so noble a subject; however, the audience were certainly disappointed; and Mr. Shirley did not approve himself a good Englishman, in letting a Frenchman carry away all the applause from the renowned Prince of Wales. To speak the truth, the fire and spirit of Ribemont, a French officer, (a part admirably acted by Barry) was the great support of the piece, which was, by the friendship of Mr. Garrick for the author carried through the usual life-time of a play. I venture to say so much, because I believe the author himself, now all resentment is buried in Mr. Garrick's grave, will allow so much. Mr. Shirley was in Lisbon during the dreadful earthquake in 1755, and very narrowly escaped from its ruins. Some time before his arrival in England, his tragedy of Electra was offered to Mr. Garrick, in full confidence that he would represent it. But the manager, after perusal, advised the author to permit it to be acted in the summer season, at Drury-lane theatre. This supposed contempt of the play brought on a very long and disagreeable quarrel, which ended in great resentment on the side of the author, who thought himself egregiously injured by the manager's persisting to refuse the acting of his play in the winter season.

Mr. Shirley is certainly a man of abilities, as his Letters upon Trade, published in the newspapers, and signed Lusitanicus, evidently prove; but the criticks have questioned whether his poetical talents are equal to his knowledge of commerce: of this I shall not pretend to judge; but it is said he wrote several papers, in the Herald, against Mr. Garrick, with much animosity, and, indeed, I think too with great acrimony. He likewise, I am told, printed a pamphlet, called Remarks on the Original and Present State of the Drama; with a humorous tract, called Hecate's Prophecy; or, a characteristic Dialogue betwixt future Managers and their Dependents; all tending to depreciate the consequence, and expose the avarice and unfair dealings of the managers with authors, actors, &c. This last piece of Hecate's Prophecy was written in a vein of pleasantry; and to those who knew the persons concerned, it must have afforded considerable diversion.

In the first and more serious part of this pamphlet, the author describes the ancient condition of the stage in Greece and Rome, preceded by a short but judicious view of the design and intention of all stage representation. From Greece he passes to France; and after bestowing an eulogium on cardinal Richlieu; whom he calls the *divine* Richlieu, divine, I suppose, because he wrote plays; he suddenly points his artillery against the modern Roscius, in a long quotation from the paper called the Herald, in which the writer charges him with preferring pantomimes, farces, &c. to the encouragement of new plays, and

frittering and fribbling Shakspeare ; with many other tricks of managerial craft. He then proceeds to an examination of his acting capacity ; which is so far from being a fair and impartial delineation of his merits or defects, that it consists of nothing but unmeaning raillery and pointless satire, with, indeed, some few just reflections upon the extravagant and silly encomiums of Roscius's flatterers. We have then another extract from the Herald ; and Wilks, Booth, Cibber, Dogget, Johnson, Miller, Mrs. Oldfield, and Mrs. Porter, are ranged in battle array against Roscius, whose cunning, the writer insinuates, is an over-match for the real merit of these accomplished comedians. After some severe reflections on the grave authors, and especially our divines, who prostituted their talents in the service of Roscius, by employing their pens in eulogiums on his merit, &c. we are presented with the Prophecy of Hecate, in which Garrick and Mr. Lacy, the prompter, the treasurer, the box-keeper, and other stage-dependents are introduced, under feigned names, as interlocutors. It begins with a kind of mock ode in praise of Roscius ; after which we have a whimsical detail of the tricks practised in the letting of places in the boxes ; the art of supporting plays and farces, by employing certain puffers at coffeehouses in the city, and at the court end of the town ; the distribution of orders to keep up an appearance of full houses ; the methods of checking the importance of rising players ; and other supposed artifices put in use by Roscius and his partner. Upon the whole, the Prophecy of Hecate has a good deal of laugh-

able merit; Mr. Garrick's conversation is not badly mimicked, though stretched in many places to a caricature. This publication unquestionably wounded a man of Mr. Garrick's sensibility, and contributed to widen the quarrel beyond all reconciliation; for the manager declared that nothing upon earth should prevail upon him to act the tragedy of *Electra*. Many criticisms upon Mr. Garrick's acting were occasionally published in a newspaper, and attributed to this gentleman. However, there is a time when resentment ought to be succeeded by a disposition to reconciliation. Mr. Garrick, however irascible, was far from being implacable. Before he left the stage, amidst other sacrifices to good-humour and good-nature, he put an end to the quarrel between Mr. Shirley and himself; one of the articles of peace was a promise to prevail upon Mr. Sheridan to act the *Roman Sacrifice*, which the event has proved was punctually performed. The next character is a subject so very extraordinary that I think myself obliged to dwell upon it a little longer than perhaps some of my readers may think it deserves.

Dr. Paul Hiffernan was a native of Ireland; and it was said, though I believe not truly, that he owed part of his education to the university of Dublin. His first employment, as a writer, was against the famous Dr. Lucas; and, it must be confessed, that never were two authors better matched; for though we should grant that Lucas was a warm friend to his country, and a disinterested patriot, he certainly knew nothing of the art of writing politicks, as his

pamphlets abundantly testify. That he was obliged to quit Ireland in a hurry, I am afraid, we must not attribute to the keenness of Dr. Hiffernan's writings, but to the animosity of the corporation of Dublin, and the vigour of his enemies at the castle, during the administration of lord Harrington, whom the zealous apothecary had pertinaciously provoked. Hiffernan, though called a physician, from a degree bestowed, as it is said, by some foreign university, had very little practice. He was a man of some learning, and would have been willing to get employment from the booksellers of Dublin; but that capital was, then, rather a barren soil for authors by profession. However, he wrote in some periodical papers, and particularly in one called the *Tickler*. He commenced critick theatrical in form, and was, for some time, the terrour of the under players. Sheridan, who was then manager, knew the doctor's strength too well to fear his criticisms, and heartily despised his attacks upon his acting. About the year 1751, an acquaintance of Hiffernan, whether in earnest or jest, I cannot pretend to aver, advised him to change the capital of Ireland for that of England. "In Dublin," said this gentleman, "you want an ample field to display your abilities; you have no booksellers to employ you, no patrons to reward you. At London you will find a wide circle for your genius to range in; and my life for it, Doctor, you will soon make a great figure there."

In consequence of this advice, Hiffernan made his appearance in the metropolis of the British empire about the year 1754. He soon made himself

known among the wits at the Bedford coffeehouse, &c. to the literati, and their precursors the booksellers. The first essay of his abilities was a periodical paper called the *Tuner*, in which he laid about him most manfully. He attacked all the dramatick pieces then published, and all other writings which he thought objects worthy of his satire. And this paper, I believe, was the least exceptionable of all his works; for having then some awe of the publick, he did not launch into that scurrility and abuse in which he afterwards indulged; besides, there were in the *Tuner* some sparks of humour, and some faint rays of genius. Profit, I believe, he got none by it, nor reputation enough to encourage him in the progress of his wit.

He was, about this time, introduced to Mr. Garrick, who considered him as a poor man, and gave him a guinea, I believe, for a subscription to some lectures he had long meditated on philosophy; but whether moral or natural, I cannot call to my remembrance. Whether he thought Mr. Garrick should have been more generous, is uncertain; but he soon after, that is in 1755, shewed a disposition to quarrel with him. His first essay in dramatick poetry, called the *Choice*, a farce, was acted with no success at Covent-garden, and afterwards printed. In 1761 he published a dramatick piece called *The Wishes of a Free People*, intended as a compliment to her majesty. The design was commendable, but the execution exceedingly mean and imperfect; without plan, without poetry, or any tolerable language to attract the attention of the reader; it was



universally condemned. The author, in the preface, complains loudly of the managers of both houses, who refused to act the Wishes of a Free People; but before he condemned them, he should have been certain of the approbation of the publick when his piece was printed; they, in fact, justified the conduct of Mr. Garrick and Mr. Rich in rejecting it. Soon after, by the former's permission, his farce of the New Hippocrates was acted on two benefit nights at Drury-lane: and though this was an obvious and excellent subject for stage ridicule, in a metropolis which abounds in quacks, whose impositions are universally condemned, and so generally prevalent; yet here the doctor shewed all want of skill in the dramattick line. Neither character, nor plot, nor language, nor any thing to make an audience laugh, did his New Hippocrates present to the publick. And yet so tenacious was he of what he called a right to a benefit, that he quarrelled with the managers for stopping the run of his farce. Mr. Lacy, not having the sensibility of his partner, avowed his design never more to permit the New Hippocrates to be acted at Drury-lane; and on receiving something like a menace from the doctor, the manager, who was a stout athletick man, threatened to chastise him with a cudgel.

The doctor now was in a sad dilemma; he knew not what to do; unemployed by the booksellers, and banished from the theatre by his utter incapacity to please; though in his conversation he was still as arrogant as ever, and as fully convinced of his power to write for the stage; yet being without all business,

and having no visible means of gaining a livelihood, he was advised to apply himself to the writing little histories, such as those which the publishers call Burton Books, from the name of a bookseller, who, in the last century, pared down large folios and quartos to the size of duodecimo, or decimo octavo. To this stationer we owe the history of Valentine and Orson, Reynard the Fox, Guy Earl of Warwick, &c. The doctor, though he felt all the indignity which accompanied so mean an employment, yet was in such circumstances that he thought it advisable to comply with the advice of his friend; and for some time, I am told, he laboured with diligence in his new occupation, and, I believe, had he continued to write as a small historian for children, he might have lived with some decency. But the fit of industry did not last very long; and his consequence as an author resumed the possession of his spirit; he then commenced a political writer; and the unpopularity of lord Bute's administration, having occasioned a clamour against the Scots, Hiffennan joined the cry, and published his pamphlet of Scotchman be Modest; the profits of which were so moderate, that he had recourse, soon after, to the last and worst shift of a mean and unprincipled mind. He that values not his own life, it is said, is master of another man's: so he that has no regard for his own reputation, may, if he is desperate enough, take all manner of freedom with the characters of others. To give a reason for such a man's actions as Hiffennan is scarce possible; but his quarrel with Mr. Garrick at this time can only be

accounted for by his being denied by that gentleman some unreasonable request: however, he wrote a most bloody libel against Mr. Garrick, and one much dearer to him than himself, stuffed with the most impudent falsehoods and the vilest slanders. This was put into the hands of a printer for immediate publication. An acquaintance of Mr. Garrick, by accident, saw this impudent attack upon the peace of a family, and prevented its seeing the light,\* by recommending it to the person most injured to give the author what he wanted, which was a few guineas. The buying off this literary assassin may possibly be deemed an immoral, as well as an imprudent act. The slander, it may be said too, was so gross and palpable, that the publick would soon despise the work, and execrate the author. However, it must be said on the other side, that although, in the circle of Mr. Garrick's friends, the scandal would pass for nothing, because they knew him too well to believe it; yet his enemies, of which he had not a few, (for who have more than the successful and meritorious) would have industriously circulated these idle stories, and given them, as far as they could, the sanction of truth: besides, what may be easily confuted in the capital, cannot be so well cleared up in the provinces. Scandal flies on eagle's wings; while truth, like time, comes slowly limping after, to destroy the building which falsehood has erected.

\* *Seeing the light* was an equivocal term made use of by Menage, who told an author who asked him his opinion of his book, that it ought soon to see the light; meaning that it should be burnt by the hands of the hangman.

I have said enough, and perhaps too much, on the subject of this unhappy man; and therefore shall not tire the reader's patience with a long history of his intemperance, indiscretion and profligacy. I believe that from this time, I mean from the intended publication of his libel to his death, he did not give any further provocation to Mr. Garrick, who, with great humanity, considered him as an object of his charity, not of his resentment. About the time when Mr. Garrick returned from the continent, he presented him with a Latin poem in his praise, which, I am told, did not want merit, and this panegyrick did not go unrewarded.

About the year 1766, he translated from the French a Philosophical Essay on Laughter, which he dedicated to Mr. Foote, a proper patron for such a subject; and this, I believe, procured him a good table to dine at, and a small gratuity in money. His temper, which was soured by misfortunes, and rendered more offensive by continual irregularity, could not be reconciled even to his benefactors, who continued their favours to him in spite of his petulant behaviour. He died about three years since of the jaundice, or rather a complication of disorders, and in very great want; none of his acquaintance knew where he lodged till after his death.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Account of Woodward's desertion....He is invited by Barry to become a partner in his Irish expedition....His proposal to Garrick rejected ....Reasons for refusing it....He sets out for Ireland....Unsuccessful there....Returns to England....His character.

IN the beginning of 1759, Mr. Barry, either displeased with his situation at Covent-garden, or tempted by ambition to enlarge his fortune, and to become a master instead of a servant, listened to some proposals which were made to him from certain gentlemen of Dublin, who invited him to settle in that metropolis, and build a new theatre there, in a place called Crow-street. Barry, sensible of the great hazard he must run by opposing a man so well established, and greatly esteemed, as Mr. Sheridan, was resolved, if possible, to gain such partner in the undertaking as would give some stability, as well as splendour, to it. Woodward was certainly the most eligible man he could fix upon: he knew that he would fill a large and desirable, as well as difficult, list of parts in comedy; and his skill and performance in pantomimes would render double service to the scheme.

Woodward was not displeased at the proposal; it presented many charms of profit, at the same time that it gratified his ambition. Yet the matter had its difficulties; and as he loved to get money without running any hazard, they appeared to him, on serious examination, in a formidable light. Mr.

Garrick and he had lived upon the most friendly and familiar terms; his income was much larger than that of any actor in his walk; and though the manager was always decisive in his determinations respecting the choice of plays, the merit of actors, &c., yet he often paid Woodward the compliment to ask his advice upon any stage emergency, and seemed to have great deference for his judgment.

Between the desire of gaining more money, with the title and power of manager, and the fear of losing what his merit and assiduity had enabled him to hoard, Woodward was long and anxiously suspended; at last he was determined to make such a proposal to Mr. Garrick, which, on consideration of his great merit and long services, he imagined would not be refused.

He offered to continue with his old masters, on condition they would enter into an engagement, in writing, to pay him as large an income as they then gave, or should hereafter give, to any actor or actress. This he thought a very reasonable demand; and he appealed to them if his services did not merit such a particular consideration, from a conviction that he laboured incessantly, and was very often called upon to exercise his talents in plays, farces, and pantomimes.

Mr. Garrick acknowledged his merit; but observed to him, that he was well rewarded for it: he bid him recollect, that no comick actor ever had enjoyed so large a salary as himself; that if he was subject to unusual labour, in the contriving and preparing a new pantomime, he was not sparingly paid for it by

the profits of an extra benefit, as harlequin, independent of another for his acting; that the tying the managers down to such an extraordinary article, was shutting the door upon great and unexpected merit; for it was possible an actor might arise, and gain so highly the favour of the publick by his uncommon talents, that the managers might think themselves obliged to recompense his merit by a larger stipend than any player had hitherto enjoyed. He advised him to be content with his present happy situation, and not to be led by vain ambitious views to forsake his old and best friends, and to hazard that property which had cost him so much art and industry to acquire.

These remonstrances had for a time some weight with Woodward; he was loth to give up a certain income for the delusive charms of a flattering contingency. Mrs. Woodward too was much averse to the Dublin scheme, and wished to stay in a place where they enjoyed so competent a portion of wealth and estimation. But Barry, who, with no extent of knowledge, and a moderate share of understanding, had the most engaging, and almost enchanting manner of persuasion, so worked upon his two darling passions, the love of money and the lust of power, that Woodward at last was prevailed upon to sign articles of joint partnership with him.

I believe Mr. Garrick would, at another time, have listened to any reasonable request of Woodward, for the farther increase of his income; but the seizing this opportunity of raising his terms, in a time of distress, he thought not only unjust, but mean

and ungrateful. I believe too, that Mr. Garrick had such a reliance upon Woodward's attachment to him, that he did not seek to continue his connexion with him by any written articles, but depended solely on a verbal agreement from year to year. However, he was determined not to buy any man's services by a bribe; a conduct which might induce his actors to leave him when governed by caprice or interest. This manager, in his greatest difficulties, was never without resources. An accomplished young gentleman, whose family connexions have long since, to the great regret of the publick, occasioned his total separation from the stage, for some few years acted a variety of characters in genteel life, with great and merited applause, some of which had in them a mixture of gayety and levity, and a peculiar and pleasing vivacity. In elegance of deportment, and variety of graceful action, he excelled all the players of his time.

Soon after, Mr. King was brought from Dublin, to supply many of Mr. Woodward's parts. He not only answered the publick expectation in that respect, but, by playing some new characters, such as Prattle in *The Deuce is in Him*, Lord Ogilby in the *Clandestine Marriage*, and others, he added much to his former reputation. Woodward's Irish scheme was attended with many vexations, and very considerable losses.

Dublin will not in haste be able to support two playhouses. The opposition between Crow-street and Smock-alley was carried on with great industry, and much vehemence, to the mutual loss and dis-



grace of both companies. The pamphlets (except that which was written by Mr. Sheridan) published on both sides, were drawn up in the style of resentment and malevolence. The contending parties strove to blacken each other by the most opprobrious and unjustifiable language.

Mr. Sheridan offered to compromise the dispute by sharing the profits with Barry and Woodward, or by letting his playhouse to them on reasonable terms. Nothing less than a total resignation of his right would content these arbitrary monarchs.

After three or four unsuccessful campaigns, Woodward returned to England, with a loss, as I have been informed, of above three thousand pounds. Barry followed him two years after. Woodward, on his return to his native country, could not expect admission at Drury-lane theatre. The characters by which he had principally distinguished himself, had been shared amongst several players; nor was Mr. Garrick willing to disoblige them, by shewing him any marks of favour. His old acquaintance Mr. John Beard, one whose name every body will read with pleasure, was then, and had been ever since the death of his father-in-law, Mr. Rich, manager of Covent-garden theatre. He gave Woodward a warm and hearty welcome, and such an income as seemed to gratify his wishes. He spoke, what was then termed, a humorous prologue, on his first appearance; in which, by calling himself a truant and prodigal son, he hoped to merit forgiveness by his behaviour in future. Some strokes which he admitted against the Irish, in this address to

the publick, gave offence to many gentlemen of that country; and of this indiscretion he felt the severe effects, when he paid Ireland a visit about a year after. Such an uproar was made as soon as he entered upon the Dublin stage, that he was forced to quit that city without obtaining permission to act.

Woodward died about two years since; his loss was severely felt; more especially as several actors of great merit, such as Shuter, Weston, &c. were deceased much about the same time. He was an actor, who, for various abilities to delight an audience in comick characters, had scarce an equal. His person was so regularly formed, and his look so serious and composed, that an indifferent observer would have supposed his talents were adapted to characters of a serious cast; to the real fine gentleman, to the man of graceful deportment and elegant demeanour, rather than to the affecter of gayety, the brisk fop, and pert coxcomb. But the moment he opened his mouth on the stage, a certain ludicrous air laid hold of his features, and every muscle of his face ranged itself on the side of levity. The very tones of his voice inspired comick ideas; and though he often wished to act tragedy, he never could speak a line with propriety that was serious. A burlesque imitation of tragedy was exhibited by him happily in the *Apprentice*. Churchill, in his *Rosciad*, charges him with action bordering upon the extravagant; and observes, that he excelled most in parts where nature had stretched her power to ridiculous excess.

This partly may be true; but this was copying nature still.

All the variations of brisk impertinence and assumed consequence, of affected gayety, unblushing effrontery, and lively absurdity, he displayed with a most engaging and laughing confidence. In Congreve's Sir Joseph Wittol, Brisk, Tattle, and Wit-would; in Shakspeare's Parolles, Lucio, Ostrick, and Mercutio, he was extremely entertaining, and kept the audience perpetually and merrily attentive. In Cibber's and Vanbrugh's Foppingtons he pleased, by a peculiar art which he lent them; for the real character was then lost to the publick. In confidential servants, such as Sancho in the *Mistake*, and Lissardo in *The Wonder, a Woman Keeps a Secret*, he was a mixture of drollery and impudence. In the Bobadil of Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, Woodward partly drew the character from his own conception, and partly from Ben Jonson the actor's Noll Bluff in the *Old Batchelor*. The calm, and seemingly intrepid, bully, was a part not easily portraited; and as the author is sparing of his colours in drawing the character, the actor is at liberty to wanton as he pleases in the exhibition of it. Of Bobadil we must say too, that he did not pursue the ideas of it, as given at rehearsal by the manager; who, according to custom, read the play, and gave his instructions to the performers. Woodward profited by his own conceptions of the part, and borrowed nothing from Mr. Garrick.

This actor had a liberal education; a regard for which he retained to the last, and endeavoured to support by a small, but well chosen library of books. He was well respected by many gentlemen of good taste and learning, whose acquaintance he cultivated by occasional conversation, or periodical meetings.

As a companion, Woodward was merely inoffensive; he was rather a silent observer than a social converser; he seldom or never entered into the spirit or gayety of company, and seemed to be a stranger to convivial pleasure. As a member who belongs to a particular society, Woodward was so far from being beloved, that he was very much disliked. He strove, as far as he could, to play the tyrant; and, on the first night of a new pantomime, he terrified the carpenters and scene-men by his loud vociferations. He was a man too selfish to consult the good of any community; for after having grudgingly contributed, for some time, his portion, according to the rate of a very ample yearly stipend, to the players' fund, he refused to continue his payments; from this ungenerous mode of reasoning, I suppose, that he thought he could not possibly be an object of charity himself. After all, the whole of his fortune did not exceed, as I am informed, the sum of fifteen hundred pounds.

He left by his will an annual income to a late celebrated actress; but the bequest, as I am told, was so unhappily worded, that when she was in very great distress, and wanted to make use of the legacy, she could not obtain any part of it for a certain

time to come. She was obliged to have recourse to the generosity of the players, who, of all people, are the readiest to assist persons in distressed circumstances. By their charitable contributions, she was happily extricated from some very perplexing difficulties.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Archibald Bower's quarrel with Mr. Garrick; with an account of the actor's resentment....Purposes to make him a subject for the stage....His correspondence on that occasion with lord Lyttleton.... Is diverted from his intention.

ABOUT the year 1755, or rather before that time, Mr. Archibald Bower, a Scotch Jesuit, published periodically a History of the Popes, from St. Peter to Lambertini, the then reigning pontiff; at the same time he printed his Motives of Conversion from Popery to Protestantism. The narrative appeared to have something in it so very singular and fabulous, that the learned in general suspected the truth of it. A writer, whose learning can only be equalled by his humanity, a man born to detect the fallacies and impostures of his countrymen, examined very accurately the grounds of Bower's Conversion; and published, about the year 1755, a very critical Examination of Bower's Pamphlet, which was thought to be a complete detection of an arch impostor. Mr. Garrick happened, amongst others to speak with some freedom upon a subject which was discussed in all companies: he was indeed so fully convinced of his guilt, that he had given orders to his servants to shut his doors against him. But Bower was not a man easily to be vanquished; for although not a deep scholar, he had acquired, from continual practice, a facility of style, a plausi-

bility of argument, and a good arrangement of matter, with an assumed contempt of his adversaries, which served to impose upon the unwary, and amused even some of the learned. It must be granted too, that though his cause was desperate in the eyes of the discerning, yet he himself was pitied. Notwithstanding that his adversary supported the side of truth, from the most generous and disinterested motives; yet, because he had no particular interest in it, it was said that his attack was unnecessary, nay, that it was wanton and cruel. The publick will always pity the unfortunate, whether the man is hunted down by fair detection of his fallacies, or consigned, after a fair trial, by the judge to legal punishment.

In the summary which Bower published of his case, joined to one of the volumes of his Popish History, and wherein he takes upon him to give a full answer to all his adversaries, though he was too sagacious to proclaim to the world his being refused entrance into Mr. Garrick's house, which was the principal cause of his anger to him, he occasionally threw out some severe strokes upon him: he treated the interference of a player as a piece of the highest impertinence, and occasionally reflected upon one very dear to Mr. Garrick.

This alarmed the spirits, and fired the resentment of our manager; he determined to make an example of the impostor, and to bring his character upon the stage. But as lord Lyttleton had honoured Bower with his friendship, and had, notwithstanding all that had been said and written against him continu-

ed to countenance and protect him, he thought it an act of decency to acquaint his lordship with his intention.

Mr. Garrick read his own letter to me, as well as his lordship's answer. The first contained complaints of Bower's ill behaviour to Mr. Garrick; his resolution to write a farce, with a short outline of it. Bower was to be introduced on the stage as a Mock Convert, and to be shewn in various attitudes, in which the profligacy of his character was to be exposed. However, he submitted the matter to his lordship, and declared that he should not proceed a step in his resentment without his permission.

The answer, I remember perfectly well, was comprised in very polite and condescending terms; but at the same time he declined the countenancing an attempt which would be attended, perhaps, with some little uneasiness to himself. He expressed himself in the most obliging and friendly terms to Mr. Garrick; and, as far as I can recollect, recommended the suppressing his intended chastisement of Bower.

The favour shewn by a nobleman of the brightest and most unblemished character to this reformed jesuit was often the subject of conversation, and sometimes the object of censure. The detection of Bower, by Dr. Douglas, was so clear and evident, that the credit of the History of the Popes was immediately sunk to nothing. The man apparently felt all the horrors of a hypocrite discovered. But this nobleman having once espoused him and his



cause, could not easily resign him to publick abhorrence; he thought, perhaps, that the abandoning the unhappy wretch would render him a worse enemy to society, by driving him to despair, than his sheltering him from shame and ruin could hurt the cause of virtue and religion. Mr. Garrick, in consequence of lord Lyttleton's letter, gave up all farther thoughts of introducing Bower to the publick.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Winter's Tale, and Catherine and Petruchio.....Their alterations from Shakspeare by Mr. Garrick.....Acting of these plays.....Merits of the several actors.

AMONGST the plays of Shakspeare which Mr. Garrick revived, were the Winter's Tale, and the Taming of the Shrew. Each of these comedies being reduced by him into three acts, and called Florizel and Perdita, and Catherine and Petruchio, they both pleased the audience greatly; he often introduced them to the publick by a humorous prologue of his own writing, in which he criticised the various palates of the publick for theatrical representation, and compared the wine of Shakspeare to a bottle of brisk Champaign. The Taming of the Shrew was not altogether written in Shakspeare's best manner, though it contained many scenes well worth preserving. The fable was certainly of the farcical kind, and some of the characters rather exaggerated. The loppings from this luxuriant tree of the old poet were not only judicious, but necessary to preserve the pristine trunk. Woodward's Petruchio was, perhaps, more wild, extravagant, and fantastical than the author designed it should be; and he carried his acting of it to an almost ridiculous excess.

Mrs. Clive, though a perfect mistress of Catherine's humour, seemed to be over-borne by the extrava-

gant and triumphant grotesque of Woodward; she appeared to be over-awed as much by his manner of acting, as Catherine is represented to be in the fable. In one of his mad fits, when he and his bride are at supper, Woodward stuck a fork, it is said, in Mrs. Clive's finger; and in pushing her off the stage, he was so much in earnest, that he threw her down: as it was well known that they did not greatly respect one another, it was believed that something more than chance contributed to these excesses.

The *Winter's Tale* is as rich in all the variety of Shakspeare's creative powers as almost any of this great writer's productions. Few of his plays will bear that unbounded liberty of amputation practised by the alterer of the *Winter's Tale*. Whole scenes may be omitted or shortened; graftings, though sparingly, may be admitted: but the entire alteration of a fable spoils the whole; nor can any of Shakspeare's characters be varied from his original intention; they are the children of his own forming, and they may be fairly trusted to shift for themselves. The original design of Shakspeare is generally so comprehensive and peculiar, that it cannot be changed without maiming or defacing the whole structure.

The plot of jealousy in the *Winter's Tale* can only be exceeded by the more masterly scenes of *Othello*. The author was himself aware of the impropriety of lengthening his plot to the immoderate space of sixteen years; and has in the *Winter's Tale*, as in his *Henry the Fifth*, provid-

ed the remedy of a chorus; here he introduces time to smooth the interval, and to prepare the audience for the appearance of Florizel and Perdita.

Mutilated as Mr. Garrick's revived play was, it had considerable merit as well as success.

The story, as he reduced it, was not ill told. The sheep-shearing was preserved, with a very pleasing song on the subject, which Mrs. Cibber, in the part of Perdita, sung with that sweet simplicity which became the character. The piece was in general well acted. Mr. Garrick's Leontes, though he gave but half of that finished character, was masterly; his action and whole behaviour, during the supposed disenchancing of Hermione, was extremely affecting. Mrs. Cibber's Perdita, Mrs. Pritchard's Hermione, Woodward's Clown, Berry's Old Shepherd, John Beard's Peasant, and, above all, Yates's Autolycus, were such portraits of nature, as we must almost despair of seeing again in one piece.

It should not be forgotten that the fable of this play had been likewise altered, and acted with some degree of approbation at the theatre in Covent-garden. Mr. Barry acted Florizel, and Miss Nossiter Perdita. Mr. Sheridan has also revived Garrick's Florizel and Perdita, with some farther improvements; but he has retained the old name of the Winter's Tale.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Dr. Smollet....His quarrel with Mr. Garrick, and his severe censures on him and Mr. Quin....His application for the acting of a farce....Its success....Mr. Garrick's generous conduct to him.... Mr. Garrick's letter to the doctor....Smollet's letter of acknowledgment.

**DR. SMOLLET**, before he knew which way his genius would conduct him, had conceived a very early opinion of his talents for writing dramatick poetry. Fired with this notion, he set about a tragedy, (he says himself at the age of 18) the story of which he took from the history of Scotland, and which he called the *Regicide*. Unacquainted as he then was with the world, he imagined that he had nothing to do but to shew his work to the manager of a theatre, and it would be instantaneously brought on the stage. But the difficulties he met with gave him an utter dislike to managers and players. Mr. Garrick was in such high favour with the publick, that the doctor conceived his opinion would fix the fortune of his play. The actor, in reading over a play, has undoubtedly an eye to his own reputation; and if it comprehends a character in which he imagines that he should be distinguished to his advantage, he will be ready to give his voice in favour of it. How far this might, or might not, be the case with respect to the *Regicide*, I cannot tell. It is certain that Mr. Garrick did not warmly espouse

that play. I believe he very cautiously and constantly referred him to the manager, with a promise, that if it was to be played, he should have no objection to act a part in it. Mr. Quin too was solicited to patronise the *Regicide*; but, I believe, his answer was more decisive and more offensive than that of Mr. Garrick: however, Smollet supposed that the latter had interest to do what he pleased in a theatre, and the weight of his resentment fell chiefly upon him. In his *Roderick Random*, the author told his own story with an unpardonable malignity to Garrick; but the actor was sufficiently revenged by the publication of the *Regicide*; which at once fully justified the neglect of the managers, and the contempt of the players.

Smollet was not satisfied with the many severe strokes of satire which he had bestowed on the governing players, and especially on Mr. Garrick, in his *Roderick Random*; but by a very malicious and laboured criticism, which he put into the mouth of his Peregrine Pickle, the hero of a novel of that name, and published about three years after the other, he endeavoured to degrade Mr. Garrick and Mr. Quin to the lowest class of their profession. The doctor was a man of genius, but he certainly rated it to its full value. He was one too who abounded in generosity and good nature; but was at the same time extremely splenetick and resentful; nor did he always consider whether the matter of quarrel was founded in justice, or arose from his unreasonable and too contemptuous opinion of others.

However unsuccessful Smollet was in one part of dramattick poetry, he was resolved to try his abilities in another; he fancied that his talents for humour and character, which he had so happily displayed in his novels, might be easily wrought up into comick scenes. In 1757 he wrote his *Tars of Old England*, a comedy of two acts, which comprehends all the provincial jargon of Ireland, Scotland, and France; which was, indeed, no ill contrivance to secure the success of this farrago.

Mr. Garrick was applied to, I suppose, with some fears of the author, lest his farce should not meet a favourable reception from a man whom he had so grossly slandered. However, the manager approved the piece; and he acted it in the best manner he could. *The Tars of Old England* procured the author a pretty large benefit: and here Mr. Garrick had the satisfaction to gratify Smollet by not asking the price which might in rigour have been exacted by the managers, for the charges of a benefit. Of this Mr. Garrick apprised him in the following letter.

To DR. SMOLLET.

“ November 26, 1757.

“ Sir,

“ There was a mistake made by our office keepers to your prejudice, which has given me much uneasiness. Though the expense of our theatre every night amounts to 90*l.* upwards, yet we take no more from gentlemen who produce an original performance, than 60 guineas; they who alter only an old play,

pay 80 guineas for the expense, as in the instance of *Amphytrion*: this occasioned the mistake, which I did not discover till lately. Though it is very reasonable to take fourscore pounds for the expense of the house, yet as we have not yet regulated this matter, I cannot possibly agree that Dr. Smollet shall be the first precedent. I have enclosed a draught upon Mr. Clutterbuck for the sum due to you. I am, most sincerely,

“ Your most obedient,  
humble Servant,  
D. GARRICK.”

From this time not only all animosities between the manager and the doctor ceased, but a very warm and reciprocal friendship commenced, which lasted till Smollet's death. He was truly desirous of making amends for his many illiberal and bitter censures of Mr. Garrick; and at the close of his history speaks of him not only with justice, but with all the warm colouring of laboured panegyric. In giving a sketch of the Liberal Arts during the reign of George II., Smollet expresses himself of Garrick in the following words:

“ The exhibitions of the stage were improved to the most exquisite entertainment by the talents and management of Garrick, who greatly surpassed all his predecessors of this, and, perhaps, every other nation, in his genius for acting, in the sweetness and variety of his tones, the irresistible magick of his eye, the fire and vivacity of his action, the elegance of attitude, and the whole pathos of expression.”



Not content with this publick declaration of his sentiments with respect to Mr. Garrick, upon the latter's presenting him with his *Winter's Tale*, altered from Shakspeare, in acknowledging the receipt of his favour, Smollet tells him, with an earnest protestation, "that in what he had published concerning him, in his account of the Liberal Arts, he had spoken the language of his heart; that he could not, in such a part of his work forbear doing justice to a genius who had no rival. Besides, he thought it a duty incumbent on him to make a publick atonement, in a work of truth, for the wrongs done him in a work of fiction."

He concluded in expressing a deep regret that his ill health prevented him from a personal cultivation of his good will, and that it deprived him of the unspeakable enjoyment he should derive from his private conversation.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr. Macklin's farce of Love Alamode....Its success....Mr. Sheridan's engagement with the managers of Drury-lane...Terms of agreement ....Mr. Sheridan supposed to have raised the jealousy of Mr. Garrick by his merit in acting....Brooke's Earl of Essex....King John... The king's opinion of the acting that character....The quarrel between Mr. Garrick and Mr. Sheridan....Comedy of the Discovery  
 ....Sir Antony Brannville.

**A**BOUT the year 1760, Mr. Macklin offered his farce of Love Alamode to the managers of Drury-lane. Some of the players had so little expectation of its being relished by the publick, that they foretold its approaching destruction; and, I believe, one or two principal characters were refused by them on various pretences. What Mr. Garrick's opinion of it was before it was acted, I never heard; but it was well rehearsed under the care and inspection of the author himself, who intended, I believe to have acted Sir Callachan O'Brallaghan, had he found a proper person for Sir Archy M'Sarcasm. But it was, perhaps, fortunate for the piece, that the Scotchman fell to his own share. Moody acted the Irishman, and 'Squire Groom fell to the lot of Mr. King; and both acquitted themselves highly to the satisfaction of the publick.

This little piece was a just and severe satire on the base duplicity, pride and meanness of some Scotchmen, and the wretched attachment of our young nobility and gentry to horse-racing. Sir Callachan

was a good portrait of a brave, honest, and blundering Irishman ; a Jew Broker was another character ; all of them lovers to a young lady of very considerable fortune.

The several scenes in which these well drawn characters were introduced, are full of shrewd remarks, strong humour, and poignant satire, with pertinent observations on the manners and customs of the times.

During the first run of this farce, some gentlemen of North Britain were highly offended at the character of M'Sarcasm, which they very imprudently declared was a satire upon the whole kingdom of Scotland. Many imprecations, almost in his hearing, were bestowed upon the author. That Scotland, as well as England and Ireland, can furnish materials to draw pictures of pride, flattery, duplicity, vanity and meanness, cannot surely be denied ; but as 'Squire Groom would not be acknowledged to be a faithful representative of England, nor a blundering Irishman of Hibernia, neither can we suppose that M'Sarcasm was chosen to stand forth as a member elect for the whole kingdom of Scotland. The prejudices of some gentlemen of that country were very strong for a long time, and not easily removed ; while others, of the same nation, enjoyed the joke as highly as the rest of the audience. The piece certainly has great and unquestioned merit ; but I doubt whether it would have succeeded so greatly, if the resentment of those Scotch gentlemen who disliked it, had not provoked the mirth of others, and spread the fame of *Love Alamode* all over the town.

George the Second, who was then in the 77th year of his age, and had, for some time, discontinued his appearance at the theatre, had heard so much of Love Alamoode, that he sent for the manuscript, and commanded an old Hanoverian gentleman to read it to him. This person spent eleven weeks in misrepresenting the author's meaning. He was totally void of humour, and unacquainted with the English language. The king, however, was much pleased with the Irishman's getting the better of his rivals, and gaining the lady.

Mr. Sheridan, thinking it not prudent to oppose the new managers, Barry and Woodward, in Dublin, in their first career, after letting his playhouse to some adventurers, set out for London.

The acquisition of such an actor as Mr. Sheridan must have been desirable to the managers of either of the London theatres. It was the mutual interest of Mr. Garrick and Mr. Sheridan to come to a reasonable agreement; this was soon effected, notwithstanding a coldness had for some time subsisted between them. It was stipulated that Mr. Sheridan should act a certain number of nights, and receive a fourth share of profits, after deducting 80*l.* for the expenses of the theatre. Mr. Sheridan had been long esteemed a man of eminence in his profession; and notwithstanding Mr. Garrick's great reputation for acting, some criticks did not scruple to compare, nay prefer Sheridan's performance of certain capital characters, such as Macbeth and Hamlet, to the other's utmost efforts in those parts.

But indeed the manager's own jealousy justified the publick good opinion of Mr. Sheridan's ability ; though certainly there was a wide difference between their several pretensions ; neither in person nor voice, had nature been very kind to the latter. But his judgment, his learning, and close application to study compensated in some degree for the want of external advantages. His manner, though certainly not very pleasing, was supposed to be his own, and not borrowed from an imitation of other actors. He had besides the advantage of an excellent character in private life. Sheridan had the peculiar honour, when absent from Ireland, to be distinguished by the legislature of his country, as a man whose particular interest was worthy of their care and attention.

Mr. Garrick soon found that his engagement with this actor was of very great advantage to him. Little difference in the bulk of audiences was to be perceived when they acted separately, the parts of Hamlet, and Richard, or any other capital character. The manager himself owned that, except Barry, he had never found so able an assistant ; for the best of them, he said, could scarcely draw together an hundred pounds' audience. But Garrick's ruling passion was the love of fame ; and his uneasiness, arising from the success of Sheridan, began every day to be more and more visible. However, he seemed for a time to suspend his jealousy, and promote every scheme proposed by Sheridan for their mutual profit.

The tragedy of the Earl of Essex, by Banks, had long lain neglected, though no play had ever produced a stronger effect upon an audience ; for though *the language is a wretched compound of mean*

phrase and bombast expression, and is indeed much below criticism; yet in the art of moving the passions Banks has no superiour; and this proceeds from his connecting his story so artfully by a regular continuity of scenes, and placing his characters in such affecting situations, that the action alone supplied that pathos which no beauty of language could improve. Wilks and Mrs. Porter, in *Essex* and *Queen Elizabeth*, engaged the affections of the audience so powerfully, that more tears were never shed at any play than Banks's *Unhappy Favourite*.

The language of this tragedy had been long since reformed by Mr. James Ralph, of whom I have already spoken. The whole was composed anew by Jones and Brooke. The latter seems to have been willing to retain some of the obscure and harsh style of Banks, or at least I think he occasionally imitated the language of the old dramatick writers. Jones preserved the original economy of the tragedy, and gave it a more harmonious and pleasing dialogue than either Ralph or Brooke. He had, besides, in the representation of his play, the advantage of a Mrs. Cibber for his *Rutland*, and a Barry for his *Essex*, whose fine figure, noble manner, and pathetick feeling, rendered his exhibition superiour to all the representers of that favourite character.

Mr. Sheridan, after having made some judicious alterations, brought the *Essex* of Brooke to the theatre of Drury-lane. Mrs. Pritchard filled the part of the *Queen* with dignity and spirit. Mr. Sheridan's *Essex* was a stage effort where art predominates more than nature. In several passages

of the play he was unexceptionably just almost to a degree of excellence. His suppression of anger to the Queen, in the third act, by judiciously lowering the tone of his voice, when ready to exclaim with unbridled rage of resentment, did not escape the applause of a critical audience.

In that scene of the last act where the earl and his countess, before he is led off to execution, meet to part for ever, he well knew his inability to reach the melting tenderness of a Barry; but his tears were accompanied with a manly sorrow, and without that loud vociferation of grief which resembles what is vulgarly called blubbering, into which the actor, in a scene of distress, is sometimes incautiously betrayed.

In some select plays Garrick and Sheridan joined their forces, in order to crowd the benches of the theatre; particularly in Horatio and Lothario in the Fair Penitent, and the King and the Bastard in Shakspeare's King John.

This play had been revived about the year 1744, nearly in its original state, to withstand an alteration and supposed improvement of it written by Colley Cibber; which, after it had lain dormant for some time in the hands of Mr. Fleetwood, the alterer, upon some disgust, withdrew. It was, however, acted at Covent-garden theatre with some success, notwithstanding its great inferiority to the old tragedy. Cibber was so little acquainted with the genius of Shakspeare, that he melted down the Bastard, Falconbridge, which is one of the richest portraits of humour, to an almost insignificant dependent

of the king. He was weak enough too, in extreme old age, to act the part of Cardinal Pandulph; but his voice, which was never either strong or pleasing, was by time rendered quite feeble and inarticulate. His deportment was much commended by some, who pretended to admire his majestick step and lofty stateliness: to others his action appeared very affected, and most eminently insignificant. However, much ought to be pardoned on account of his very advanced age. Cibber did not know his own defects; he was at best a very imperfect and disagreeable speaker of tragedy, though he seemed to value himself much on his talent in the buskin. He reproached Mrs. Pritchard, who acted Lady Constance, for want of a *tone*, as he called it, though he granted she spoke with propriety and feeling.

Shakspeare's King John was played with great success at Drury-lane. The king was personated by Mr. Garrick with very great skill, and unusual energy of action; but it must be confessed that Mrs. Cibber, by an uncommon pathetick ardour in speaking, and a surprising dignity of action and deportment, threw every actor in the play at a great distance. This had a greater effect, from her never having before attempted characters where power of voice and action were so greatly requisite to express the passions of rage, anguish, and despair.

This tragedy had, on Mrs. Cibber's engagement at Covent-garden, been discontinued for several years at Drury-lane; but, soon after she returned to that theatre, in 1755, Mr. Garrick revived it. He then took the part of the Bastard, and gave the King to Mr. Mossop.



When the two principal characters of this tragedy were divided between Mr. Garrick and Mr. Sheridan, the former chose the King, and he actually consented that the Bastard should be Mr. Sheridan's part. Secretly he was determined to the contrary; and after making some apology to Mr. Sheridan, he endeavoured to persuade him to exchange parts; to which the latter was extremely averse: I know not for what reason; for though he understood the sense and spirit of the part, yet there is in the Bastard Falconbridge an exuberant wantonness of humour, and a romantick spirit of gallantry, which Mr. Sheridan could not assume. Nor could Mr. Garrick, with all his spirit and art, attain perfectly to the full exhibition of the character: he was so defective in the mechanical part of it, I mean height, look, and sinew, that he was obliged to search carefully for a proper actor to play his half brother, one with a consumptive look and a meagre form, to contrast and set off his own person; and though in this he met with tolerable success, yet still there was a deficiency: nor did the speeches which related to the Bastard's manly form produce the desired effect.

It is but justice to the memory of Walker, who was the original actor of Macheath, to say, that he performed Shakspeare's Bastard in King John with such native humour, spirited action, and vigorous deportment, -that, I think, no actor has, since his time, given an equal idea of the part.

Mr. Sheridan was, by continual solicitation of the manager, prevailed upon at last to take the part of

King John; and in this compliance, I think, he gained great advantage to himself: the deep tones of his voice, and the vehemence of his action, were well adapted to the turbulent and gloomy passions of John. In the scene with Hubert in the third act, his representation of the anxiety and distress of a mind which strongly labours with, and yet is afraid to discover, a secret big with horror and death, was expressed with the feelings of one who is a master of the human heart. That accurate observer of the players' deficiencies, Churchill, could not withhold his approbation of Sheridan's action in King John, though in his panegyrick he threw some ludicrous strokes on his excesses in look and action. The play was acted several nights, and was honoured with the king's command.

Sheridan's success in King John heightened Garrick's jealousy, especially when he was informed by a very intimate acquaintance, that the king was uncommonly pleased with that actor's representation of the part. This was a bitter cup; and, to make the draught still more unpalatable, upon his asking whether his majesty approved his playing the Bastard, he was told, without the least compliment paid to his action, it was imagined that the king thought the character was rather too bold in the drawing, and that the colouring was overcharged and glaring. Mr. Garrick, who had been so accustomed to applause, and who of all men living most sensibly felt the neglect of it, was greatly struck with a preference given to another, and which left him out of all consideration; and though the boxes were taken

for King John several nights successively, he would never after permit the play to be acted.

The royal opinion of King John contributed to dissolve the union between these rival actors : it was impossible they could longer continue in one theatre. Meetings of friends succeeded to meetings, in order to reconcile disputes, and put an end to animosities, but in vain; these heroes of the stage resembled the two great chiefs of Rome; one could not bear an equal, nor the other a superiour.

Notwithstanding it was become impossible to adjust differences between the manager and Mr. Sheridan in such a manner as to bring them on the same stage, and upon the usual terms of acting; yet, when Mrs. Sheridan's comedy of the Discovery was offered to Mr. Garrick, he accepted it, and consented that Mr. Sheridan should play the principal part in the play, and receive for his labour the advantage of two nights profits, besides those of two more for the author.

He was indeed so warm in behalf of the Discovery, that he assured a publisher who afterwards bought a share in it, that it was one of the best comedies he had ever read; and that he could not do better than to lay out his money in so valuable a purchase.

This play, notwithstanding some scenes of it were rather heavy, was a great favourite of the publick. Sir Harry and Lady Flutter were the blooming offspring of Nature; their frivolous follies their quarrels and reconcilements, were the result of youthful gayety, and thoughtless inexperience.

The amiable author seemed to have a strong predilection in favour of Sir Anthony Bransville, a coxcomb of the last age, whose whole behaviour is made up of formality and ceremonious scrupulosity. A lover without passion, and a fop deficient in vigour of absurdity, may be favoured with the simper of a Chesterfield or a Lord Froth, but will never raise an honest burst of laughter from an English audience.

Mr. Garrick, in acting this part, it was said, either did not, or would not, understand the idea of the author. However, his reputation for pleasing in Bransville was so great, that he was very lately, I believe the year he left the stage, called upon by a royal command to revive the *Discovery*, and play Sir Anthony Bransville.

This comedy, as well as all the other writings of Mrs. Sheridan, is a faithful picture of manners. But Sir Anthony Bransville has hitherto produced little effect on the stage.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Mrs. Woffington.....Educated by Madame Violante.....Acts among the Lilliputians of Dublin.....Her Sir Harry Wildair in London .....Lothario in Dublin.....Her chief stage excellence.....Stoops to parts in low comedy.....Lady Pliant and Mrs. Day.....Colley Cibber her admirer, Cicisbeo and instructor.....Acts Ophelia and Cordelia with Mr. Garrick in Ireland.....Her quarrels with Mrs. Clive.....Visits Ireland in 1751.....Her opinion of the conversation of women.....Returns to London in 1754.....Her character.....Dies.

A SHORT sketch of an actress so celebrated for beauty of countenance and elegance of form, as well as merit in her profession, as Mrs. Woffington, will be expected by the reader of this narrative.

Mrs. Margaret Woffington was born at Dublin in 1718. For her education, in the very early part of life, she was indebted to Madame Violante, a French woman of good reputation, and famous for feats of agility. She is occasionally mentioned in Swift's Defence of Lord Cartaret. From her instructions little Woffington learned that easy action and graceful deportment, which she afterwards endeavoured, with unremitting application, to improve. When the Beggar's Opera was first acted at Dublin, it was so much applauded and admired, that all ranks of people flocked to see it. A company of children, under the title of Lilliputians, were encouraged to represent this favourite piece at the Theatre Royal; and Miss Woffington, then in the tenth year of her

age, made a very distinguished figure amongst these pigmy comedians.

She appeared, for the first time in London, at the theatre in Covent-garden, in 1738. Her choice of character excited the curiosity of the publick; Sir Harry Wildair, acted by a woman, was a novelty; this gay, dissipated, good-humoured rake, she represented with so much ease, elegance, and propriety of deportment, that no male actor has since equalled her in that part: she acquitted herself so much to the general satisfaction, that it became fashionable to see Mrs. Woffington personate Sir Harry Wildair. The managers soon found it to be their interest to announce her frequently for that favourite character; it proved a constant charm to fill their houses.

In Dublin she tried her powers of acting a tragedy rake, for Lothario is certainly of that cast; but whether she was as greatly accomplished in the manly tread of the buskin'd libertine, as she was in the genteel walk of the gay gentleman in comedy, I know not; but it is certain that she did not meet with the same approbation in the part of Lothario, as in that of Wildair.

Her chief merit in acting, I think, consisted in the representation of females in high rank, and of dignified elegance, whose graces in deportment, as well as foibles, she understood, and displayed in a very lively and pleasing manner. The fashionable irregularities and sprightly coquetry of a Millamant, a Lady Townly, Lady Betty Modish, and Maria in the Non-Juror, were exhibited by Woffington with that happy ease and gayety, and with such powerful

attraction, that the excesses of these characters appeared not only pardonable, but agreeable.

But this actress did not confine herself to parts of superiour elegance; she loved to wanton with ignorance when combined with absurdity, and to play with petulance and folly, with peevishness and vulgarity: those who remember her *Lady Pliant* in Congreve's *Double Dealer*, will recollect with great pleasure her whimsical discovery of passion, and her awkwardly assumed prudery: in *Mrs. Day*, in the *Committee*, she made no scruple to disguise her beautiful countenance, by drawing on it the lines of deformity, and the wrinkles of old age; and to put on the tawdry habiliments and vulgar manners of an old hypocritical city vixen.

As, in her profession, she aimed at attaining general excellence, she studied several parts of the most pathetick, as well as lofty class in tragedy; and was resolved to perfect herself in the grace and grandeur of the French theatre. With this view she visited Paris; here she was introduced to *Mademoiselle Dumesnil*, an actress celebrated for natural elocution and dignified action. *Colley Cibber*, at the age of seventy, professed himself *Mrs. Woffington's* humble admirer; he thought himself happy to be her *Cicisbeo* and instructor: his great delight was to play *Nykin*, or *Fondlewife* in the *Old Batchelor*, to her *Cocky*, or *Letitia*, in the same play.

On her return from Paris, she acted with approbation some parts in tragedy, particularly *Andromache* and *Hermione* in the *Distressed Mother*, which, to shew her proficiency, she played alternately; but

she never could attain to that happy art of speaking, nor reach that skill of touching the passions, so justly admired in Cibber and Pritchard. Old Colley, her master, was himself a mean actor in tragedy, though he was extremely fond of the buskin; he taught her to recite so pompously, that nature and passion were not seldom sacrificed to a false glare of eloquence. The teacher insisted upon a particular *tone*, as he called it, in the declamation of his pupils.

Mr. Garrick's acquaintance with Mrs. Woffington commenced, I believe, in Ireland, when he first visited that kingdom, in 1742; she acted Cordelia and Ophelia to his Lear and Hamlet. When he commenced patentee, in 1747, he found her one of the articulated comedians of Mr. Lacy; but, as he brought with him from Covent-garden Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard, she thought her continuing at Drury-lane would be attended with many disagreeable contentions for characters. Before that time, Clive and Woffington had clashed on various occasions, which brought forth squabbles, diverting enough to their several partisans amongst the actors. Woffington was well bred, seemingly dispassionate, and at all times mistress of herself. Clive was frank, open, and impetuous; what came uppermost in her mind, she spoke without reserve: the other blunted the sharp speeches of Clive by her apparently civil, but keen and sarcastick replies; thus she often threw Clive off her guard by an arch severity, which the warmth of the other could not easily parry.

No two women of high rank ever hated one another more unreservedly than these great dames of



the theatre. But though the passions of each were as lofty as those of a first dutchess, yet they wanted the courtly art of concealing them; and this occasioned now and then a very grotesque scene in the Green-room.

Mrs. Woffington, after acting a few years with Mr. Rich, engaged herself, in 1751, to Mr. Sheridan, the manager of the Dublin theatre. Here she continued three years, and was the admiration of the publick in a variety of parts, tragick and comick. Her company was sought after by men of the first rank and distinction; persons of the gravest character, and most eminent for learning, were proud of her acquaintance, and charmed with her conversation. She was, I think, chosen president of a select society of beaux esprits, called the Beef Steak Club, and was the only woman in the company.

She frankly declared, that she preferred the company of men to that of women; the latter, she said, talked of nothing but silks and scandal. Whether this particular preference of the conversation of males might not take its rise from her not being admitted to visit certain ladies of quality, I will not take upon me to say; but she certainly had not that free access to women of rank and virtue which was permitted to Oldfield and Cibber.

Mrs. Woffington\* was mistress of a good understanding, which was much improved by company and books. She had a most attractive sprightliness

\* We have on the stage at this time a very pleasing and beautiful young actress. Miss Farren, not very unlike Mrs. Woffington in her person, who it is hoped, will in time, by continued application, arrive at great excellence.

in her manner, and dearly loved to pursue the bagatelle of vivacity and humour : she was affable, good-natured, and charitable. When she returned to London, in 1756, she once more engaged herself to Mr. Rich ; and died, about a year before his death, of a gradual decay.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Churchill's *Rosciad*.....The players alarmed.....Their behaviour on the publication of the poem ....Garrick exalted above all actors..... Churchill angry at the players.....He renews his attack, and obliquely aims at Mr. Garrick, who writes a defence of his conduct .....Churchill's praises of his friends, particularly Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Colman.....His contempt of the Reviewers.....His attack on Mr. Murphy, &c.....His friendship for Mr. Wilkes.....Dies at Boulogne.

**I**N March 1761, the poem of the *Rosciad* was published, or rather it stole into the world; for it was barely announced, I believe, by one or two advertisements, without any additional notice of its subject.

This satire upon the defect of the players was at once severe, humorous, and diverting: it exhibited a great variety of characters with much wit and pleasantry, and laid hold of the peculiar failings by which the actors were distinguished.

The writer, with the art of a skilful surgeon, probed the wound to the bottom, but was not very gentle in the use of his instrument.

Churchill had for a long time frequented the playhouse: he bestowed incessant attention on stage representation; and, by close application, laboured to understand perfectly the subject which was the choice of his muse. His observatory was generally the first row of the pit, next to the orchestra. In this place he thought he could best

discern the real workings of the passions in the actors, or what they substituted in the place of them.

The author soon found that he had no occasion to advertise his poem in the publick prints; the players spread its fame all over the town; they ran about like so many stricken deer; they strove to extract the arrow from the wound, by communicating the knowledge of it to their friends. The publick, so far from being aggrieved, enjoyed the distress of the players; they thought the *Rosciad* a pleasant and reasonable retaliation for the mirth which the stage had continually excited at their expense.

The poem, though a very poignant censure on the mistakes and defects of the players in general, was a laboured panegyrick upon Mr. Garrick, who purchased more envy by it than he could possibly acquire fame; which was so enlarged, that even the *Rosciad* could not extend it farther. The writer, very warmly, as well as justly, celebrated the various and peculiar excellencies of Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Clive; but no one man, except Mr. Garrick, escaped his satirical lash.

The first edition of this poem was published without the name of the author. The critical reviewers attributed the writing of it to Thornton, Colman, and Lloyd. Even when his name was affixed to the second edition, the incredulity of these critics still continued. But Churchill was not a man to be trifled with, or insulted; he asserted his right to the poem, and treated the authors of the *Review* with the utmost contempt. The rapid sale of the satire

(which in a short time passed through several editions) raised the reputation of the writer, who till then was unknown, to a very high pitch of eminence. In every impression he constantly made alterations and additions; and such of the players who, from their too great sensibility, or peevishness of temper, afforded him an opportunity to give an additional stroke of satire, were sure to feel the effects of his anger.

It was observed by the laughers, that the players who were most hurt pretended to be the least sensible of their own injuries, but were extremely warm in their feelings for the obloquy thrown upon others. "Why (said one of these disinterested persons) should this man attack Mr. Havard? I am not at all concerned for myself; but what has poor Billy Havard done, that he must be treated so cruelly?" "And pray" said a gentleman who was present at this mock declaration of benevolence, "what has Mr. Havard done, that he cannot bear his misfortunes as well as another?"

Many pamphlets and poems were published against the Rosciad, in vindication of the players; which were so poorly written, that they only served to swell Churchill's triumph.

Mr. Garrick's situation, during this anxiety and uneasiness of the players, was something awkward. The praise bestowed upon him came from no mean hand. The character of Roscius was esteemed to be one of the warmest and most masterly descriptions of his abilities which had hitherto been penned. He certainly felt all the charms of a distinc-

tion which placed him on an eminence superiour to all men of his profession. Churchill had raised a magnificent Colossus to him on the broken statues of his contemporaries. He, however, seemed not to approve the wantonness of that pen which had made him another Saturn, and so greedy an engrosser of praise, as to swallow not only his own, but that of his household too. Whether he was induced to look cold upon his panegyrist, or had dropped some expressions which were officiously carried to Churchill, I know not; but the poet, in a very short time, printed the Apology, in which he treated the profession of acting in a most contemptuous manner. He painted in the strongest colours the meanness and distress of the itinerant actors, and with such a cruel exposition of the many unhappy shifts to which they are occasionally reduced, that it was plain the author had felt the reproaches and resentment of the players more than he ought. Nor content with overwhelming the whole herd of them with his satire, he ventured some bold strokes at Roscius himself. That he aimed at Mr. Garrick in the following lines cannot be doubted.

Let the vain tyrant sit amidst his guards,  
His puny green room wits, and venal bards,  
Who meanly tremble at a puppet's frowns,  
And for a playhouse freedom sell their own.  
In spite of new made laws, and new made kings,  
The free born muse with lib'ral spirit sings,  
Bow down, ye slaves; before these idols fall;  
Let genius stoop to them who've none at all.  
Ne'er will I flatter, cringe, or bend the knee  
To those, who slaves to all, are slaves to me.

These sarcastick strokes were not bestowed in vain upon the manager; he felt all the force of them, and was exceedingly unhappy that he should have provoked so irritable and so powerful a writer. To insure a reconciliation, he wrote a long letter to Churchill, which comprehended an apology for himself and the players, full of encomiums upon his uncommon vein of poetry, with a deprecation of the poet's future wrath. This epistle he read to a friend, expecting his approbation of it in very ample terms; but here he was disappointed; he was told, that as the satirist had attacked him on very slight, or scarce any provocation, it was too much condescension in him to write such a laboured vindication of his conduct, and with such an expostulation, in which many of the expressions were too humiliating, and even degrading; that the writer of the *Rosciad*, who was a man of quick discernment and an undaunted spirit, would not think the better of him for his very soothing apology. Thus was he constantly the dupe of his sensibility, which first precipitated him into errors, and as often plunged him into further difficulties, by an awkward endeavour to extricate himself from them.

The players, I believe, were not so much displeased with Churchill's Apology, which degraded the profession of acting itself, as with the *Rosciad*, which pointed at their particular faults, and named the persons guilty of them. It was no small consolation to them, that in the Apology their master was not spared: Indeed their anger did them more injury than any thing else; they contributed, by

their ill-judged clamours, to propagate the satire, and to multiply editions of the poem. Some stories were told of their unavailing attacks on Churchill, which served to divert the publick, and make sport for him and his friends.

An excellent comick actor, it was said, was so extremely angry at the poet's presuming to include his wife (who is now the great ornament of the stage in tragedy) amongst those whom he had censured, that he invited Churchill to a tavern, it was supposed, with an intent either to expostulate with him on his behaviour, or to discuss the matter in a more decisive manner; and that Mr. George Garrick, hearing what was the purpose of their withdrawing, ran to the place of meeting: he found them extremely enraged; but by good fortune he reconciled the contending parties with a bottle.

Churchill had ridiculed the only fault, perhaps, which could fairly be charged on this actor, which was an occasional defect of memory. To hide this, he would sometimes repeat a sentence two or three times over; and to shew his courage, after the poem was published, he took particular care to reiterate the very words which Churchill had made the record of his satire.\* This was a circumstance totally unknown to the people before the stage; but the good folks behind the scenes enjoyed the jest, and laughed heartily to see the poet and the player bully one another most manfully by their looks. It has been

\* Hark you ! hark you ! Polly Honeycomb.



observed, that the memory of this actor, as he has advanced in years, is become more retentive.

It would be unjust to insinuate, that all the actors felt themselves equally hurt by Churchill's satire: some of them took no notice of the poem; others wisely endeavoured to profit by his comment on their faults. Barry, Woodward, and Mossop, who were most severely handled, were at that time in Ireland, and owed their first knowledge of the rank which they held in the Rosciad, to a Dublin edition of it. Havard was more offended than became a man so calm and dispassionate. Ross pleaded guilty, and laughed at his punishment over a glass with his friend Bonnel Thornton. Sparks was too much a man of the world to be hurt by a poetical arrow. King was displeased, but King kept his temper. Shuter, out of revenge, got very merry with the poet. Foote, who lived by degrading all characters, was outrageously offended. Whether there was a particular stroke which he felt more than was known to others, I cannot tell; but he was most violent in his anger. He wrote a prose dialogue, wherein he lampooned Churchill and Lloyd; I believe he was too wise to publish it. I remember that, with his usual alliteration, of which he was very fond, he called Churchill *the clumsy curate of Clapham*.

This poem was of so comprehensive a species, that the author extended his plan so as to include writers as well as players. He found room too for praise as well as reproach. Mr. Colman was greatly commended for his comedy of the Jealous Wife; and Mr. Murphy was condemned in the lump. On

the Jealous Wife he bestowed great and deserved commendations. That part of the fable which was borrowed from Tom Jones was certainly not the best of the comedy; for 'Squire Russet was but a faint copy of that inimitable rustick brute Western; and Lady Bellaston is a richer picture of profligacy in high life than Lady Freeloze. The scenes of jealousy between Oakley and his wife were worked up with all the warmth of true comedy; nor did Mr. Garrick ever give a stronger proof of his great knowledge of nature than in his making Oakley, who was thought to be little better than a picture in still life, a character of importance. Mrs. Oakley was a finished portrait of a wilful and obstinate woman, who pretends to fits of jealousy and love, that she may govern her husband with more absolute power, and was admirably personated by Mrs. Pritchard. This play had the good fortune to please the criticks, and the publick in general; but such was the partiality of Churchill, that another comedy, called All in the Wrong, written by Mr. Murphy, passed unnoticed by him, though many of the scenes are written with an easy gayety and elegant sprightliness, not unworthy of Vanbrugh and Cibber.

Dr. Hill, who was a quack in medicine, and not to be depended on in science, and Dr. Smollet, the supposed reviewer of Churchill's Rosciad, were considerable objects of his satirick rage. The first deserved the lash of the poet; for he had spared no character of friend or foe, when either his malice was to be gratified, or his purse to be made heavier. He was,

without contest, a man of abilities, and of large and various reading; but his integrity was questionable in science and fact. By his malevolent conduct he drew down the vengeance of Woodward upon him, who represented him on the stage in the character of a mock doctor. He prevailed, with much intreaty, upon Mr. Garrick to act his farce of the Rout, which was universally exploded. Smollet very handsomely exculpated himself from the charge of writing the review of the Rosciad, in a letter to Mr. Garrick; but so warm was Churchill in his temper, and so prone to take offence, that, besides his satirizing the writer of the Critical Review, he extended his resentment to the printer of it; a man incapable of a mean and ungenerous action, and whose company, upon better information, the poet wished to enjoy.

It is no wonder that Churchill should be elated by the great success of his poems. He was a great admirer of Dryden, in preference to Pope; indeed the quick turns of thought, and strength of expression, with the variety of versification in his own works, are no mean proofs that he studied and copied Dryden's manner.

Here let me bend, great Dryden, at thy shrine,  
 Thou dearest name to all the tuneful Nine.  
 What if some dull lines in cold order creep,  
 And, with his theme, the poet seems to sleep;  
 Still when his subject rises proud to view,  
 With equal strength the poet rises too:  
 With strong invention, noblest vigour fraught,  
 Thought still springs up, and rises out of thought;  
 Numbers ennobling numbers in their course,  
 In varied sweetness flow, and varied force:

The powers of genius and of judgment join,  
And the whole art of poetry is thine.

*Churchill's Apology.*

He held Pope so cheap, that one of his most intimate friends assured me, that he had some thoughts of attacking his poetry; and another gentleman informed me, that in a convivial hour he wished the bard of Twickenham was alive, that he might have an opportunity to make him bring forth all his art of poetry; for he would not only have a struggle with him for pre-eminence, but endeavour to break his heart.\*

Of Churchill we may say without hesitation, that he was a man of genius, and of a temper firm and undaunted; often led away by pleasure, but at times strenuously active. His thoughts issued from him with ease, rapidity, and vigour. In three or four years he wrote above a dozen large poems, amidst all the dissipations of a gay, unthinking life.

He was frequently entertained by Mr. Garrick at Hampton, and at his house in town; but would never accept of any playhouse freedom, or other favour, from him. He was steady in his friendships. Mr. Robert Lloyd was one of his oldest acquaintance, whom he much valued. This gentleman's interest Mr. Garrick endeavoured ardently to promote, by procuring a large subscription to a volume of his poems. Mr. Lloyd brought on the stage of Drury-lane, in 1761, a pastoral called *Arcadia*, an elegant pænegyrick on their majesties' nuptials. Though the

\* This must be considered as a wild effusion over a bottle.

manager exerted all his powers to promote its success, it was but short lived. He had, in November, 1760, written a mask called the Tears and Triumphs of Parnassus, which was neglected almost as soon as seen on the stage; but his Capricious Lovers, a comic opera, performed in 1761, at Drury-lane, met with a better fate; it was acted nine nights, and was generally liked. Lloyd destroyed himself by intemperance; and died in the Fleet-prison, 1764, soon after he had received the news of Churchill's death.

Mr. Churchill's dearest and most valued friend was John Wilkes. During his residence in France, Churchill was resolved to pay him a visit. They met at Boulogne; Churchill was then much indisposed; and it is said, that his indulging too lavishly in French wines accelerated his death in a few days. His last words were, as I am well informed, *What a fool have I been !\**

\* Churchill was so apprehensive of his approaching death, that, just before he set out for France, he told an intimate acquaintance, that he feared he should never return to England.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Coronation at both theatres....Death of Mr. Rich....His character....  
Farmer's Return.

THE coronation of their Majesties, in September, 1761, was followed by a stage representation of it at both the playhouses. This had been an usual practice on such occasions, from the days of James the First to the present time. This spectacle had been remarkably magnificent, and attended with great profit to the managers of Drury-lane in 1727, who exhibited themselves, and their best actors. Booth, Wilkes, Cibber, Mills, and Mrs. Porter, acted the principal characters in Shakspeare's *Henry the Eighth*.

Mr. Garrick knew very well that Rich would spare no expense in the presentation of his shew : he knew too that he had a taste in the ordering, dressing, and setting out these pompous processions, superiour to his own ; he therefore was contented with reviving the coronation with the old dresses which had been often occasionally used from 1727, to 1761. This shew he repeated for near forty nights successively, sometimes at the end of a play, and at other times after a farce. The exhibition was the meanest, and the most unworthy of a theatre, I ever saw. The stage indeed was opened into Drury-lane ; and a new and unexpected sight surprised the audience, of a real bonfire, and the populace huzzaing, and drinking

porter to the health of queen Anne Bullen. The stage in the mean time, amidst the parading of dukes, dutchesses, archbishops, peeresses, heralds, &c. was covered with a thick fog from the smoke of the fire, which served to hide the tawdry dresses of the processionalists. During this idle piece of mockery, the actors being exposed to the suffocations of smoke, and the raw air from the open street, were seized with colds, rheumatisms, and swelled faces. At length the indignation of the audience delivered the comedians from this wretched badge of nightly slavery, which gained nothing to the managers but disgrace and empty benches. Tired with the repeated insult of a shew which had nothing to support it but gilt copper and old rags, they fairly drove the exhibitors of it from the stage by hooting and hissing, to the great joy of the whole theatre. It is difficult to guess the reason which induced a man of Mr. Garrick's understanding to pursue a losing game so long. Though he knew that nothing could withstand the grand sight which Rich was preparing, I suppose he thought that the people, by seeing one coronation often, would not have a very keen stomach for another.

Rich, notwithstanding the expectations of the publick had been much raised, fully satisfied their warmest imaginations. Such a profusion of fine clothes, of velvet, silk, sattin, lace, feathers, jewels, pearls, &c. had not been seen upon any stage. The scenery, musick, and other ornaments were all correspondent to the grandeur of the ceremony, which

was shewn to crowded houses for near two months together.

Mr. Rich, who was a perfect master of every thing which related to theatrical effect from splendour of dress and magnificence of decoration, had taken uncommon pains with this Coronation, and lived just long enough to be pleased with the success of his labour; he died during the height of the publick eagerness to see it.

Mr. Rich was not only a very artful contriver of that kind of stage entertainment called pantomime, but an admirable actor of Harlequin, the principal character in it. Nor can we boast of any one man who has, during the space of fifty years, approached to his excellence in that part; his gesticulation was so perfectly expressive of his meaning, that every motion of his hand or head, or any part of his body, was a kind of dumb eloquence that was readily understood by the audience. Mr. Garrick's action was not more perfectly adapted to his characters, than Mr. Rich's attitudes and movements to the varied employment of the wooden sword magician. His taking leave of Colombine in one or two of his pantomimes, was at once graceful and affecting. His consummate skill in teaching others to express the language of the mind by action, was evident from the great number of actors he produced to fill up the inferiour parts of his mimick scenes; Pantaloon, Pierrot, the Clown, and all the other various characters, he formed himself; and to his instructions we owed a Hippiisley, a Nivelon, a La Guerre, an



Arthur, and a Lalause ; all excellent performers in these diverting mummeries.

Mr. Garrick, soon after the death of Mr. Rich, introduced in his *Harlequin's Invasion*, with some success, a speaking Harlequin ; and bestowed, in a prologue to it, a just eulogium upon the great skill of Mr. Rich in his personating Harlequin.

But why a speaking Harlequin ? 'Tis wrong,  
The wits will say, to give the fool a tongue.  
When Lun appear'd, with matchless art and whim,  
He gave the pow'r of speech to every limb :  
Tho' mask'd and mute, convey'd his quick intent,  
And told in frolick gestures all he meant.  
But now the motley coat, and sword of wood,  
Require a tongue to make them understood.

But Mr. Rich so far mistook his own abilities, that he valued himself more on his skill in giving instruction to the actors, than his inimitable harlequinade. His levee was constantly crowded with a number of candidates for the buskin, for he thought himself a perfect master of tragick elocution : and though he could not read ten lines with propriety, yet he had constantly a Richard, a Hamlet, or a Lear, in training for the stage. He was so very fond of this employment, that the meanest mechanicks, who would submit to take his instructions, were sure to be encouraged by him.

The education of Mr. Rich had been grossly neglected ; for though his understanding was good, his language was vulgar and ungrammatical : he was a perfect male Slip-slop.\* However, he had much

\* Slip-slop is an excellent character in Joseph Andrews.

entertainment in his conversation, and loved a private party where he could unbend himself. From an habitual inattention, he had contracted a strange and perverse custom of calling every body *Mister*; and this gave occasion to an unmannerly *bon mot* of Foote. After Mr. Rich had called him *Mister* several times, Foote grew warm, and asked him the reason of his not calling him by his name. "Don't be angry," (said Mr. Rich) "for I sometimes forget my own name." "That's extraordinary indeed (replied Foote;) I knew you could not write your own name, but I did not suppose you could forget it."

The squabbles in which he was engaged in the early part of his life, with Christopher Bullock, Keen, and other governing players, contributed to increase his dislike to all of that profession as long as he lived. But let it not be forgotten, that he had a long list of theatrical pensioners, male and female; and I have heard, much to the reputation of his humanity, that he never diminished their income on any pretence.

A man's true character is always best known near home. At Uxbridge Mr. Rich was esteemed an obliging neighbour, a hospitable country gentleman, and a very kind landlord. He took great delight in promoting and celebrating, at his own expense, the weddings of his young tenants, and making the new married pair happy. I am well assured, that the great consolation of this gentleman, in his dying moments, proceeded from the recollection of his many charitable actions; which he indeed had forgotten, till his friends, by bestowing their commen-

dations on him for this most amiable christian virtue, recalled them to his mind.

Mr. Garrick made some amends for his ragged shew of the Coronation by the Farmer's Return, a dramatick interlude, written by himself. The history of the world, as it goes, no man understood better than the author of this litte piece. He caught the flying Cynthia of the minute, the varying fashions and follies of the times, with a happy ease, and a flowing vein. The Farmer, after a very humorous description of the Coronation, concludes with a whimsical account of the Cock-lane ghost, which was at that time the subject of conversation, and engaged the attention of great numbers of people of both sexes. Lord Mansfield was the conjuror who laid this troublesome spirit, by punishing the father and his associates with the pillory, and confinement in prison.

## CHAPTER XXX.

Stage reformation....All in the Wrong...Citizen, and Wishes....Anecdote relating to the latter.

**T**o render the pleasure of theatrical representation complete, the delusion must be uniformly supported in every thing which appertains to a play. 'Tis not sufficient that the author writes with knowledge, and the comedian acts with propriety; every thing must contribute to the general deception; dress must mark out the country and rank of the person, the scenery point out the place of action, and the musick correspond with the passions of the characters and the incidents of the drama; in short, every decoration must contribute to throw light upon the fable. Without this universal consent of parts, the pleasure will be imperfect, and the spectators deprived of one essential requisite in the entertainment.

Our neighbours the French; who pretend to teach the rest of Europe the rules of decency and decorum, were a long time shamefully deficient in the propriety of dramatical representation. Their young nobility did not only accustom themselves to talk louder than the players, but they were so intermingled with them during the time of action, that you could scarce discover the real from the represented marquis. Moliere often complains of this absurd intrusion, and ridicules it with a poignancy that discovers his feelings were very acute on the occasion. Ba-

ron, to shame the people of rank out of this idle custom, would occasionally turn his back upon the pit, and play to the audience upon the stage. At length, in 1760, the generosity of a nobleman, the Comte de Lauragais, delivered the French stage from this gross impropriety, which had frequently mangled the acting of their best pieces; he obtained an arret from the king, which forbade any persons appearing on the stage besides the actors.

To the disgrace of common apprehension, we have often seen likewise, in our theatres, two audiences, one on the stage, and another before the curtain; more especially at the actors' benefits, when a large amphitheatre has covered almost the whole stage; and the battle of Bosworth Field has been fought in a less space than that which is commonly allotted to a cock-match.

Mr. Garrick was fully sensible of all the incoherence arising from this glaring offence against what the painters call the Costume, but knew not how to bring about a reformation. He was reminded that Mr. Sheridan, by his spirited behaviour, had conquered the refractory tempers of the Irish gentlemen, by shutting his stage door against them; and, after suffering many vexations and much opposition, had supported his right with the sanction of legal authority.

Mr. Garrick indeed must have called to mind a very ridiculous circumstance that happened on the Dublin theatre when he acted the part of King Lear. When the old king was recovering from his delirium and sleeping with his head on Cordelia's lap, a gen-

tleman stepped at that instant from behind the scenes, upon the stage, and threw his arms round Mrs. Woffington, who acted that character; nor did I hear that the audience resented, as they ought, so gross an affront offered to them, and to common decency; so long had they been accustomed to riotous and illiberal behaviour in the theatre.

The comedians, by losing the advantage of an amphitheatre on a benefit night, would be considerable losers; and, to remedy that evil, Mr. Garrick very judiciously observed, that the plan or reformation must be preceded by a considerable enlargement of the playhouse; and if it could be so contrived, that the space before the curtain might contain as many persons as had formerly filled the pit, boxes, galleries, and the stage, no body could have any pretence to murmur.

Mr. Lacy was of the same opinion, and he concurred with his partner in the prosecution of his scheme; and having a taste for architecture, he took upon himself the enlarging of the theatre, which was completely finished in the year 1762. From that time scarce any but the performers were permitted to visit the scenes of the playhouse.

Soon after this generally approved alteration of the theatre, Mr. Murphy's *All in the Wrong*, his *Old Maid* and *Citizen*, were acted with general applause. They were presented to the publick in the summer time, under the management of Mr. Foote and Mr. Murphy. The *Citizen* is entirely of English growth, and an excellent picture of city manners. Miss Elliot, a young actress of great

merit, appeared, for the first time, in the part of Maria: her figure, voice, and manner, were perfectly adapted to the sprightly humour and busy situations of the character. The applause and approbation she acquired in Maria gained her a settlement in one of the theatres.

Soon after, a comedy called *The Wishes*, founded on, or in imitation of, the Italian comedy, was presented to the publick by the same managers. Mr. Garrick had, after examination, finally rejected it, as utterly improper for the stage: he thought Harlequin, made a hero and a fine gentleman, was so unusual a sight to an English audience, that they would not bear him. However, Mr. Foote and Mr. Murphy were prevailed upon to try this exotick piece at Drury-lane. Harlequin, by his magical power, gains every thing he wishes for. Unluckily, in the last scene, while he is toying on a couch with his mistress, he wishes to be hanged; and lo! a gibbet instantly rises from behind the couch, which draws him up by the neck. The taste of the English not being refined enough to relish this admirable piece of Italian pleasantry, the comedy shared the fate of its hero, for the audience seemed to rejoice at Harlequin's execution by every mark of disapprobation they could bestow on the *Wishes*.

The dialogue of this play, which was in many places, not only unexceptionable, but easy, natural, and pleasant, with many strokes of wit, satirical remarks and just observations on the fashionable follies and bad taste of the times, deserved a better

fate than to be thrown away upon so preposterous a fable.

Mr. Garrick's rejection of the play was justified by the fate it met with; but, nevertheless, we must not be surprised that his judgment should be called in question by the author and his friends, for daring to refuse a piece, which was extremely hazardous, not only from its oddity, but from its being totally different from English manners.

Not content with venting their resentment of his behaviour in private, they published a letter addressed to the author, R. B. Esq.; in which he is thus censured: "But that any one who professes himself a man of taste, a lover of the belles lettres, a sovereign critick in dramattick performances, and one who is himself a dabbler in the business, should so far forget himself, as to reject a work of so much wit and ingenuity, and such inimitable raillery, &c." All this, and much more, was said, to expose the manager's wretched taste and deficiency of judgment, in presuming to think of the Wishes differently from the author and his friends. The case was this: the Hon. B. D--d-ington, afterwards lord M-l-mbe, in the early part of his life, was the great patron, or at least was generally so reputed, of wit and learning; and many an indifferent poem and play was, for that reason, dedicated to him. His patronage was courted by real wits, as well as pretenders; and Dr. Young has, I believe, twice sacrificed on his altar. In the decline of life, his passion to appear the Mæcenas of learning still followed him. It so happened, that some friend of the



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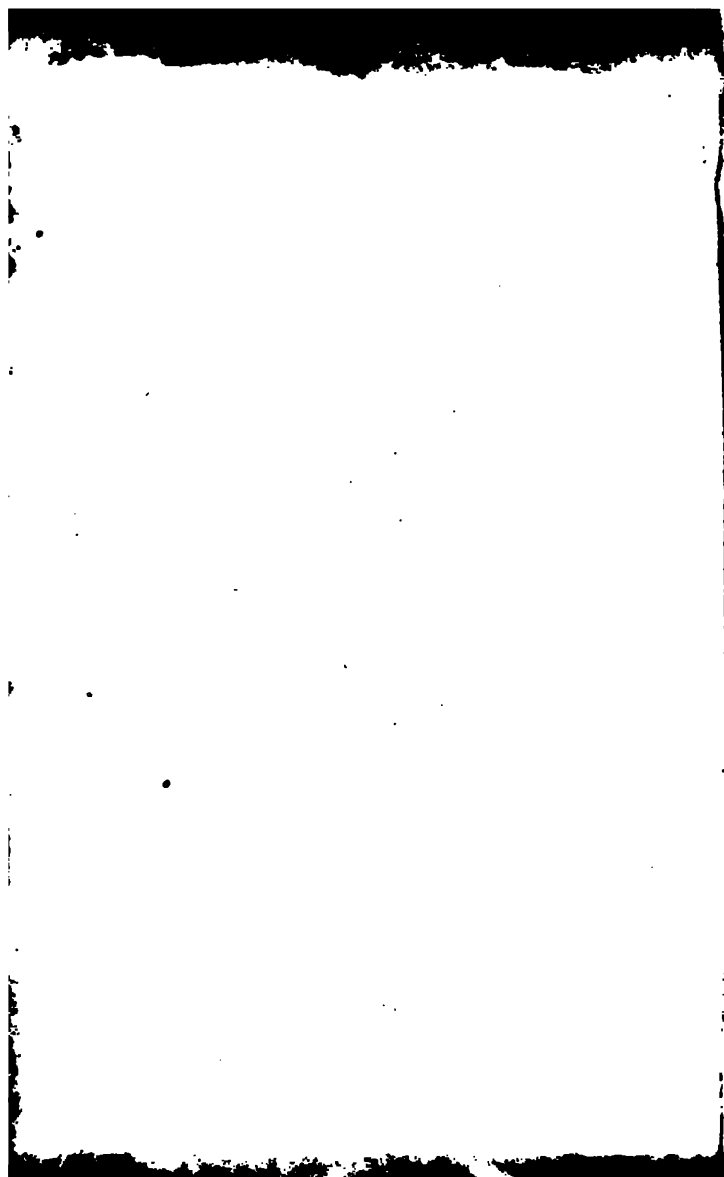
author of the *Wishes* recommended the play to his patronage. Flattered with this distinction, he solicited all the men of quality who came near him in its favour, and begged them earnestly to support so valuable a performance. But though a very good play may stand in need of friends to promote its success, no patronage will, in this country, be able to support a bad one against the publick taste.

END OF VOLUME ONE.

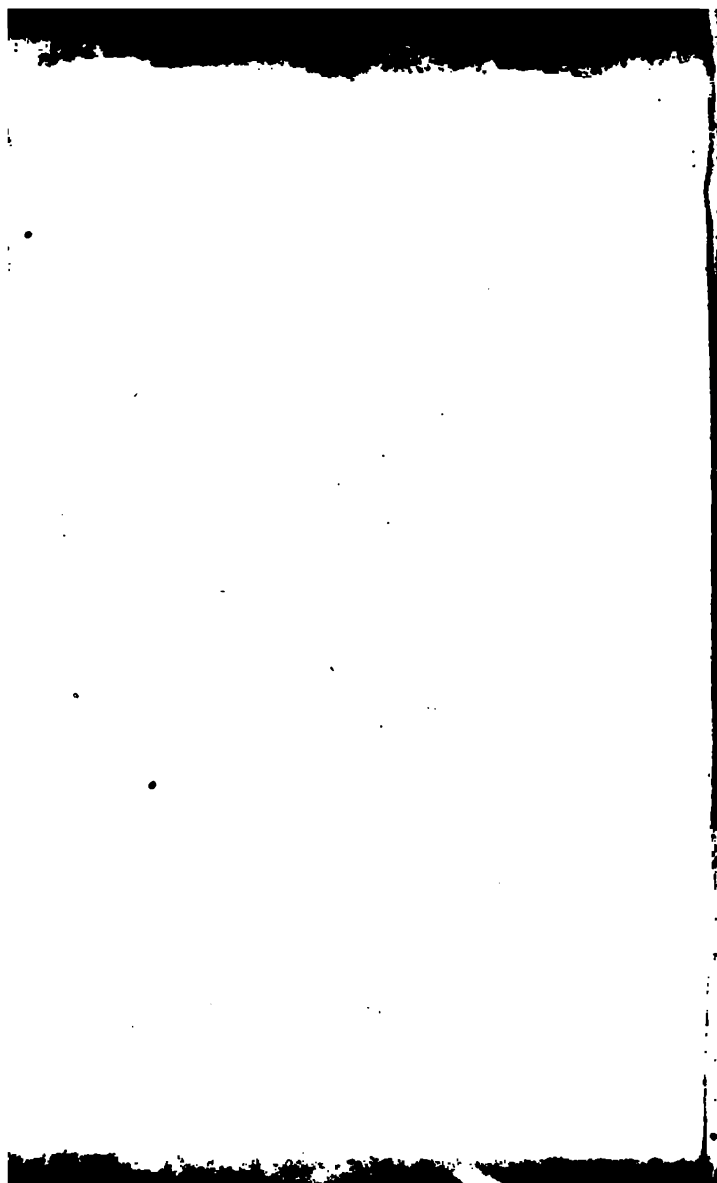


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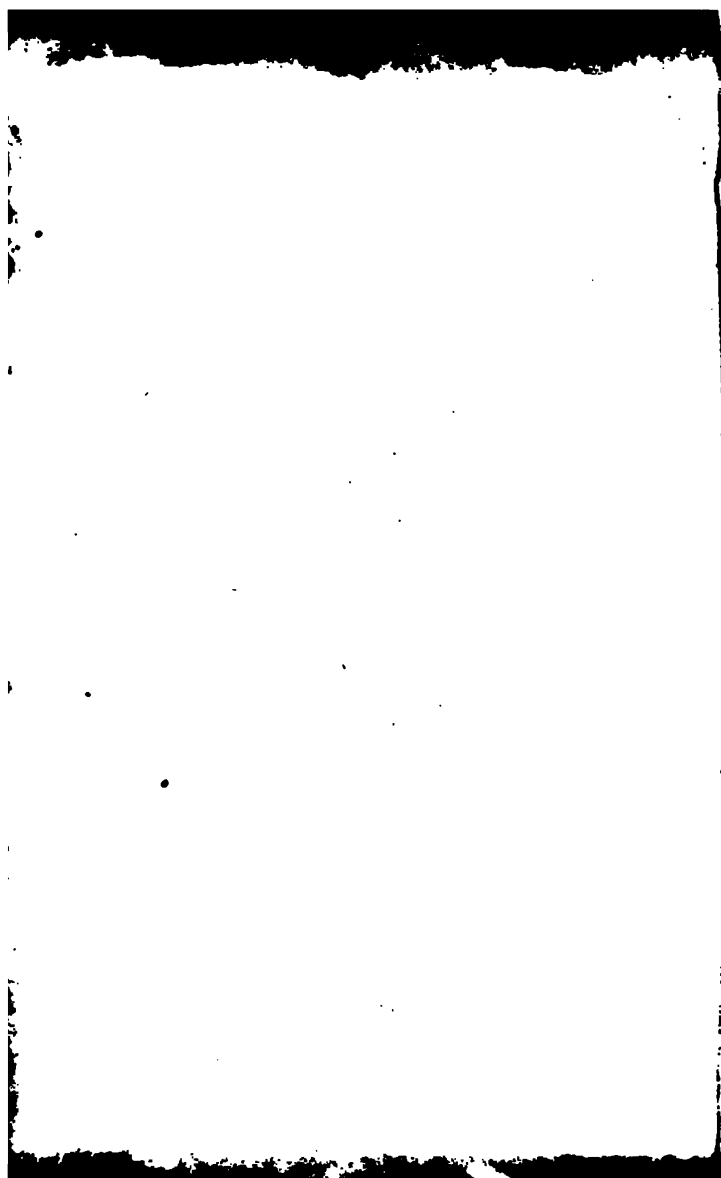


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